

Anonymous_19920325

RICHARD SHARPLESS: This is an interview with [name redacted].

The interview is taking place at the Fretz House at Lafayette College. It is March 25th, 1992, and it is approximately 12:15 p.m. Let me ask you a very sensitive question first off, [name redacted]. How old are you?

ANONYMOUS: I'm -- now wait, I was born in 1939. Then am I going to be 53 this year?

RS: You're going to be 53, that's right. And where are you from originally?

ANON: Easton.

RS: You've lived all your life in Easton? Did you go to school here?

ANON: Yes.

RS: And you're married?

ANON: Yes.

RS: Do you have any children?

ANON: Two.

RS: Two children. What are their ages?

ANON: John is going to be 30 and Catherine is going to be 26 this year. [00:01:00]

RS: Okay, now hold on a second.

[INTERRUPTION]

RS: Tell me a little bit about your working background.

ANON: Okay. Starting how far back?

RS: Right back at the beginning.

ANON: Okay. When I graduated from high school--

RS: Okay, what year was it?

ANON: 1957. Now, unfortunately at that time, the women in the family -- or the ladies or the girls -- did not go to college. I happened to be in one of those families. So I had to get a job.

RS: So you wanted to go to college? You weren't sure?

ANON: The opportunity was never even there, okay? I had to get a job, and when I knew early on that college was not in the picture, I switched to the commercial courses in high school. Our high school had excellent commercial -- prepared you thoroughly. [00:02:00] I got a job at Dixie Cup in Easton -- a division of American Can at that point, now James River.

RS: Was it relatively easy for you to get a job at that time?

ANON: Even before you graduated.

RS: Even before you graduated? There were an abundance of jobs?

ANON: Yes. There was no problem. I would say that year, Dixie Cup must have hired at least 25 people, right out of high school.

RS: It was a big company, then.

ANON: It was big.

RS: Do you have any idea how many people in total were employed there at that time?

ANON: Not at that time. It was at 24th and Dixie Avenue. And it was a big building. And it was everything -- the production, everything, the shipping, engineering. I happened to work in the engineering.

RS: And what did you do?

ANON: I was secretary to [00:03:00] to the head of the production engineering.

RS: And how long were you in that job?

ANON: From '57 until my son was born, which is 1962. And in those days, after you had a child, you stayed home, which was nice because I don't envy these ladies today that have to go back. When my daughter was eight -- Catherine was born in '65 -- when she was eight, all the ladies on my street were going back to work.

RS: Now, so you were off -- so you were essentially staying home between 19--

ANON: Sixty-five to eight years later. Seventy-something.

RS: Seventy-three. Why were all the ladies going to work?

ANON: I don't [00:04:00] remember, other than the fact that they were all going to part-time jobs.

RS: Was this for economic reasons, do you think?

ANON: I don't think so. I think it's time, at that point, when you're home with the children for a period of time. No, because the women on our street -- no, there was nobody in dire straits as far as, you know, money.

RS: So it was a choice.

ANON: Choice. Definitely a choice. I -- and again, when I worked at Dixie Cup, everything was a manual typewriter, etc., etc. Well, the electric typewriters came out. For somebody -- I mean, it's just like a person going now trying to get a job that has no computer experience. They're lost. They're absolutely lost. I had decided I had better get back now. Fortunately, I had a friend [00:05:00] who worked in one of the industries, and they had an opening, and I applied for it, and of course, I got it. With her help, I'm sure.

RS: Now what company was this?

ANON: Okay, this -- at that time -- was called Harris-Intertype.

RS: And where was that company located?

ANON: It was on -- I think it's Stones Crossing. I think Stones Crossing was the one road, and Nicholas Street. It's right out there by --

RS: I know where it is, right. So it's in Palmer Township.

ANON: It's in Palmer Township.

RS: And what do they do?

ANON: They were -- *The Allentown Call Chronicle* was a customer. Mack Printing was a customer. They produced stuffing machines for printing places, inserter machines for newspapers, the inserts, they [00:06:00] -- the machines automatically did those inserts. Stuffing machines, inserting machines, bindery equipment, that type of thing. Now when I arrived there, Sheridan Machine, which was a part of it, had closed because of the union people down here. They had an operation in Champlain, New York, that was doing basically the same thing that Sheridan Machine was doing here. This union gave them problems, and I don't know if they had a union up there or not. It was a lot cheaper up there. It was close to the Canadian border. It was, the living -- everything was cheaper. Living expenses, everything.

RS: So they moved up there?

ANON: They moved the actual machine-shop type operation up there, [00:07:00] the actual production up there. The

engineering, the purchasing, all stayed in Easton, and when I arrived there, that's what I walked into. Big engineering division, small-parts division, and there was an actual machine shop that did new equipment. When they, when they were -- Like, I think the 72P stuffing machine was a brand-new piece of equipment. And the blueprints went from the engineering right out to the machine shop, and they literally made a scale model-type thing, okay?

RS: And what did you do there?

ANON: Oh, I was a publications clerk there. Anybody that bought equipment, any new newspaper or something, you know [00:08:00] -- let's just use *The Allentown Call Chronicle* -- that bought a new piece of equipment, our department was responsible for making the documentation, like the check sheet, and if something goes wrong with the equipment, you know, go to page 28 and da da da da da. That type of thing. We did manuscripts, and I was responsible for sending all the publications out to the people. Many other things.

RS: So you did a lot of -

ANON: A lot of -- but it was all clerical at that point. All clerical.

RS: How long were you with that company?

ANON: Now here's where I have my dates. I was there from '73 to '78.

RS: Okay, five years.

ANON: I had expected to be with them forever. [00:09:00]

RS: Right. Was it a good company to work for?

ANON: It was a very nice company to work for.

RS: What do you mean by "nice"?

ANON: The people. Benefits were nice. Good. The people were excellent.

RS: How about your salary? Was that good? Would you consider that good?

ANON: No. It was adequate for what I was doing at that time, okay? And I don't remember what it was, but for that time, it was adequate. And again, I was working part-time.

RS: Oh, you were part-time? Alright.

ANON: They made it very convenient for me. I went in after my daughter left for school, and I came home before she got home. So it was very, very nice. I eventually did go full-time. And I don't know at what point I went full-time. It was more towards the latter part. But I -- at the very end, I was full-time.

RS: So for you, it was a very good job. [00:10:00]

ANON: For me, at the time, okay? They came down, and I think the federal government had something to do with it. They

built a brand-new facility in Champlain, New York, and they were moving the whole operation.

RS: Why were they doing that?

ANON: I think because Champlain, New York was a desolate area.

The government was giving them some kind of break. I don't know if it was a tax break or what type of incentive it was.

RS: The federal government or the state government?

ANON: I don't know. I don't remember. If it's important, I probably could find out.

RS: No, that's all right.

ANON: Well, we were all given the option to relocate with the company. They -- I went on a company [00:11:00] jet and toured the facility, toured the area to see if my husband and I would like to relocate to this area. They gave everyone the option.

RS: Did they offer any kind of help or aid or financial aid to relocate? Moving expenses, anything like that?

ANON: It never got down to discussion as far as --

RS: You were concerned --

ANON: -- I was concerned, but all the engineers that -- quite a few of them relocated with them. Moving expenses were paid for.

RS: The professional staff, at least.

ANON: Exactly. Exactly.

RS: Let's back up a minute. You said you went on the company jet. Obviously, that wasn't just a company located in Easton. Was it a subsidiary of a large company?

ANON: Okay, it's a division of-- now Harris-Intertype was Harris Corporation [00:12:00], and I believe at that this point, Harris Corporation is no longer. I think they have broken up into many--

RS: I think they were absorbed by another conglomerate.

ANON: Exactly. Exactly.

RS: How did your other -- how did other -- how did you feel about this decision by the company?

ANON: It was not a problem for me, because I knew I was not going to leave the area. My husband was employed. At that time, he was employed. So it was not a hardship for me at that time.

RS: What about other workers?

ANON: Yes. Other workers. You had your -- I remember a particular man in the machine shop, 59 years of age, thought he would retire. He was 59. Where do you go at 59 to get another job? [00:13:00] I don't think other than a few -- I'm going to say maybe 10 or 20 people -- that it didn't affect -- either you went with them or you stayed

here. And at that time, the economy was such that you could get another job.

RS: It was still fairly good in the late '70s.

ANON: It was still okay.

RS: So you feel then that this wasn't a major disaster.

ANON: No. Other than it was five years out of my life that I could have been using somewhere else, building up at that time for my retirement. Because in industry, if you weren't there 10 years, you were not eligible for their retirement.

RS: Even though it's five years, you just sort of lost in terms of pension. [00:14:00]

ANON: But not in the sense that I was back on my feet as far as out in the business world. So in that instance, it was good for me.

RS: You had the experience.

ANON: And I was able to go on at that point.

RS: And obviously, you did. You went to somebody else.

ANON: I was home only a short time. And, unemployment office -- because we were all qualified for unemployment at that time, and that was my first experience with that. And at that time, you had to stand in the lines.

RS: How did you feel about that?

ANON: (sighs) It was -- during the time period, it was okay.

Because nothing was depending on me to survive, okay? So I basically was going to not jump into something [00:15:00] different. Unfortunately, unemployment saw differently. Within a month, they sent me on an interview. I was hired.

RS: And who was this with?

ANON: That was with Victor-Balata, which (laughs) is still in existence. How? Nobody knows. But they are in existence. I tried to stay there as least time as possible.

RS: Now what do they manufacture? I know, but I won't say.

ANON: Belting. Conveyor belting -- conveyer belting is the one I remember the most.

RS: Right, that's essentially what they [inaudible].

ANON: Mm-hmm.

RS: And they hired you as a what?

ANON: I was hired as a secretary in the plant office, not the main office. There was a difference there.

RS: The main office was that sort of square-ish building--

ANON: That is now for sale. [00:16:00] Yes, I worked in the plant, in actually the production area.

RS: Okay, what did you do?

ANON: I was responsible -- I was basically a receptionist/secretary. I was a secretary to the personnel manager, the plant manager, the industrial engineer, the

machine shop foreman. (laughs) It was varied. It was very varied.

RS: Did you have too much to do?

ANON: I didn't have enough time to do it all, but it was a low-key type position.

RS: How were the benefits and the pay compared to the Harris company? The previous company?

ANON: On the same level.

RS: On the same level.

ANON: Probably a little advancement, but basically, I was more or less a clerical-type individual there. [00:17:00] I was now a secretary here. But we're not setting the world on fire with my salary, but at this point, it wasn't -- this was okay at this point. I stayed there a year-and-a-half, and then the Taylor-Wharton opportunity came. Taylor-Wharton was the ultimate, as far as for, to get in, and for pay. It was one of the nicest places.

RS: And where was Taylor-Wharton?

ANON: Okay, Taylor-Wharton was located right on William Penn Highway, directly across from Easton High School. And they produced gas cylinders, or oxygen cylinders, whatever.

RS: Now did they pay more, obviously?

ANON: Excellent pay rate. [00:18:00] And I went in as-- it was classified as a clerk-type thing. And I was to do a

specific job. And I had a three-month training period. I mean, it was unbelievable. Not only was the pay excellent; the benefits were super. And at this point, my husband had lost -- possibly through relocation and fire -- two jobs. So now, it's important with my salary, and my benefits, because he was on my benefits at this point.

RS: What was this -- you said that the benefits were very good. What were they?

ANON: Excellent hospitalization. Dental, which this was the first time I had had dental, ever. I wasn't eligible for their retirement [00:19:00], though. Your insurances, you know, the normal. The normal. Other than that, they were excellent plans.

RS: So you felt that when you went to Taylor-Wharton, that you would really -- like it was really a step upward.

ANON: It was definite advancement for me. And as it turned out, I was promoted. It was, it was on top of the world.

RS: And you liked working there?

ANON: I -- (laughs) Yes, it was excellent. They promoted me to a finance sales specialist. When the salesmen sold cylinders, it was either cash or the company got their own loan or they get a loan through us, which is what I processed, okay? [00:20:00] We went on to deal with a third party. We had companies like Commercial Credit that

would buy our paper. CIT Corp was the last in Philadelphia that I dealt with. Everybody was trying to get our business because it was -- and somewhere, I have the amount that I had to process, and it might have been like \$3 million a year. Something like that, that I --

RS: So the company was really booming. This would have been around 1980.

ANON: This was 1980, yes. That's exactly when I started there. In '80.

RS: How did you -- so you liked the company. Did your fellow workers, they all sort of had the same feeling about it that you had at that time?

ANON: It was a hard company to [00:21:00] get into.

RS: But it was a good company to work for.

ANON: It was an excellent company to work for. Unfortunately, there was a union.

RS: You weren't a member?

ANON: No. I was not a member of the union.

RS: Do you remember what union it was? Was it United Steelworkers?

ANON: No --

[section redacted]

RS: When did the business begin to slide?

ANON: Okay, I was there until 1984 in March.

RS: So about four years.

ANON: The year before, the sales started slipping, as far as the salesmen. Japanese cylinders had made their --

RS: Appearance.

ANON: (Laughs) appearance in the United States, and they could not compete with them. [00:23:00]

RS: You mean with quality or cost or both?

ANON: With -- well they had, they actually -- I remember, they got ahold of a Japanese cylinder and had it analyzed. They literally cut it in half -- this type of thing -- had it analyzed. And I think for what they were producing, it was an excellent cylinder at a cheaper price. So that was number one to contend with.

RS: What did they company -- how did the company react to that?

ANON: I --

RS: Did they attempt to modernize or try some newer methods?

ANON: Well, out in the plant, they had, they had modernized, but it wasn't always working properly. And I remember, there was people, I think, people from England -- and again, [name redacted] could tell you in extreme details, probably on this -- there were people over from England [00:24:00] trying to get this to work smoothly, this new piece of

equipment that they had put in that was supposed to do marvelous things that never, I don't think, really worked properly.

RS: Was this an English-made thing?

ANON: I think so. I think so. The next thing that happened was the union. Contract time. And I forgot to mention that there was a similar place in Harrisburg that was making similar cylinders also.

RS: American Marine Products, the [AMP?] Corporation.

ANON: No.

ANON: No.

RS: No?

ANON: No, this was part of Harsco.

RS: Oh, part of Taylor-Wharton?

ANON: Yes, it was part of Taylor-Wharton and Harsco. And that might have just been Taylor-Wharton Harrisburg at that point, I don't remember what the name was. [00:25:00] But -- and I was up at that facility also.

RS: Go ahead, keep going.

ANON: Contract time came up, and they were going to close one or two. Either plant, they were going to close. And it zeroed in that it was possibly going to be Harrisburg.

RS: Why were they going to close? Because of the drop in sales?

ANON: (pause) It probably was, although I don't remember at that time. (pause) I don't remember. They were going to close one of the facilities and it looked like it was going to be Harrisburg because we had this so-called this "modern," modernized equipment [00:26:00], or brand-new equipment. Harrisburg did not. They were the old, old steel plant. Contract time came up, and these men in the plant were making, at that time, a very nice salary.

RS: Do you have any idea what the range was? Ballpark figures?

ANON: I'm going to say possibly \$10 to \$13 an hour at that time.

The company came with, "We're taking away dental." They wanted a -- raises were to be frozen. They wanted lower starting salaries. Now, unfortunately, my son did a whole paper on this closing. And I called him over the weekend. [00:27:00] He lives in Virginia Beach now, and I said, "Do you know if you kept that paper?" He did it for a college course. He interviewed people out there and everything. It would have been an excellent--

RS: Yes! And he doesn't have it?

ANON: He doesn't have it. He said he would try to look for it, but he thought he threw it out.

RS: Oh! (laughs)

ANON: I know. I know. Because I remember him interviewing the gentleman in personnel that was handling the union people

at that point. And he got an A on the paper. I mean, it was an excellent paper.

RS: Maybe he wouldn't mind if I called him and interviewed him on the telephone.

ANON: He said, basically, what had happened -- from what he could remember -- was the union wanted to take away--

RS: The company wanted to -- [voices overlapping]

ANON: The company wanted to take away. The union said no.

[00:28:00] They went out on strike. There was some nastiness, and Harsco came in and said, "You're closed."

RS: Excuse me, is that tape still running? I heard a click.

ANON: It's still going.

RS: Okay. So Harsco was the parent company, and as a result of this conflict between the union and the company, they just decided to close down. What about the production? Did they have any other facilities?

ANON: Harrisburg.

RS: But Harrisburg wasn't open either.

ANON: No, no. They hadn't closed Harrisburg. They were going to close one or the other, and it looked at that point -- up until the union contract -- that Harrisburg would have been the one to be closed.

RS: They have a union in Harrisburg, if I'm not mistaken.

ANON: But they were willing to concede.

RS: I see. So the union local there was willing [00:29:00] to make concessions.

ANON: They were willing to make the concessions.

RS: I see. I remember when they closed. I do remember that.

ANON: Easton would not do it. And Harsco said, "You're done."

RS: So that was it.

ANON: Now, a few people were given the opportunity to go to Harrisburg. A few key people. The plant was closed completely.

RS: When you say "key people," do you mean top-level executives?

ANON: Top-level executives. Plant managers, all the salesman. Because I was basically in with all the salesmen because I worked closely with them.

RS: Were you given the opportunity?

ANON: No. This time, I was not given the opportunity. However, I was at the Harrisburg facility for about a week or two because one of the jobs I was doing at [00:30:00] that point, I had to teach somebody up there. The third-party companies that I dealt with -- the CIT Corps and the Commercial Credits and this type of thing there -- what was happening is, basically, they were not getting the volume. Taylor-Wharton was not, quote, the "big moneymaker" it had been in the early '80s, this type of thing. I think they

were going to eliminate my job completely and it was going to go straight directly to that third-party company.

RS: So that's the financing in charge. They were just going to go outside.

ANON: Yep. I think that's what they were going to do.

[INTERRUPTION]

RS: Okay, I had originally asked you the question, how did you respond and how did you [00:31:00] react to the closing of the company? You said that you'd had temporary work and there was a period of time when your husband had been injured, apparently. And there was the surgery. You were in a very difficult financial situation.

ANON: Okay. He fortunately went back to this company in Schuylkill Haven, but we knew at this point, we were not going to relocate. The job was not what he thought it was, it should have -- what they promised him and what it turned out to be was different. He did not get anything in writing. They would not put anything in writing. He tried to -- when he first went for the interviews, he tried to get everything in writing. They unfortunately would not do that.

RS: And you said you would never go back to work for industry.

[00:32:00]

ANON: Simply because two had closed on me. I'm a lot older. I need retirement at this point. I needed benefits, also. And I don't remember -- when I came back full-time, the benefits were welcome because I think my husband went right on our health plan here.

RS: Here at Lafayette.

ANON: Okay, when I decided to go back, it was not going to be industry. It was going to be high school or a school district. It was going to be insurance or a hospital. And fortunately, I had worked as a temp nine months at Easton Hospital. When I came for the interview here, I was offered actually three positions.

RS: Here at Lafayette?

ANON: No. [00:33:00] I was offered a position as a temporary -- as a permanent temporary employee of Easton Hospital, okay?

RS: I won't ask what that is. (laughs)

ANON: All right. I was on their payroll. Other than a Kelly or Amanda.

RS: But you weren't getting benefits or pension or anything else.

ANON: No, no. But that's the way you got in, and then you bid on jobs, okay? I was offered a secretary position with -- and I think it was Nationwide Insurance -- a brand-new office opening locally, two agents that were going out on their own, and a very small salary to start. Easton Hospital was a decent salary because I had three minutes, it was three minutes from our house, and there would not be a car involved. And I was offered the position here. The position here offered to teach me word processing [00:34:00], which I had signed up for at the college and dropped out because I was going to learn it on the job, after once I decided.

RS: But you actually had started community college in order to upgrade your skills.

ANON: I had a total of 12 credits out there. A big 12 credits. But yes, I had to. You had to. There was no other way. And for people that did not keep up with them, I see them every day, walking into my office today, and I try to tactfully recommend that they get some type of training because it's required at this point. Fortunately, when I came here, I was taught, quote, "on the job." I taught myself. But that was doable at that time. Today, it's not.

RS: Right, that's true. Now when did you start at Lafayette?
What year? [00:35:00]

ANON: 1986.

RS: 1986. So there was a two-year period from '84 to '86 in
which you were essentially--

ANON: A temporary. And collecting unemployment most of that
time period. Don't ask me -- I don't remember how I did
it, other than we were basically--

RS: Well if you worked the nine months at Easton Hospital, that
would've made you eligible. No?

ANON: It was a temporary position. Strictly a temporary
position.

RS: But you weren't collecting unemployment while you were
working. (laughs) I hope they don't catch up with you and
you have to pay it back.

ANON: No, everything was fine. I was only allowed to make so
much per week. And if anything went over, you just had to
pay, or they deducted it from-- no, everything was
within--everything was legal, you know. I think they
extended my benefits because the economy was not good. And
I think they had the same thing like where they extended
[00:36:00] benefits for an additional 13 weeks or something
like that. That's how I managed that.

RS: How did you -- okay, you already indicated how you felt about this situation, in terms of, you know, these two places closing under you, literally. Do you think this had any effect on your family life at all? I realize that's a somewhat personal question.

ANON: No. Simply because my children's college tuition was paid for with an inheritance, so there was not a huge burden. We always lived simply. We were not extravagant.

RS: So your children had the benefit of this inheritance.

ANON: They had an inheritance, both of them. It paid for their college and they both went to [00:37:02] state schools. The inheritance paid for that and actually bought them each a car. So, no, they were fine. So because we did not have a lot of bills, because we did not live extravagantly, it was tight and it was tough at times where Gene was off and I was off. And like that one period of time where it was Christmas, there was no money other than savings. I mean, I've been a victim of it, but I've survived -- we survived it. Even to this day, nobody will hire my husband.

RS: Because of his age?

ANON: No. It's because he has diabetes. And I would love for him to take this to a lawyer because he has a case.

RS: That's true. [00:38:00]

ANON: But he won't do it.

RS: Is he working at the present time?

ANON: He's working at the present time, but the company will not hire him because of the diabetes. But he has been with the company for six years through a temporary agency.

RS: I think that's illegal.

ANON: I know he has a case.

RS: I think you're right. I think he does.

ANON: I know he does, but he will not pursue it.

RS: Well anyway, I'd like to talk to him, too, because apparently, he's had the same sort of experience as you've had. Do you think your material circumstances are better or worse for your experience? In other words, the time you've been working here and everything --

ANON: Okay, um --

RS: In other words, had you been able to stay employed with Taylor-Wharton or the other companies--

ANON: I would have been way ahead of the game with Taylor-Wharton, although since I-- [00:39:00] I didn't -- now I'm in a different position than when I started here. I went from union to non-union, so I'm not -- I'm happy where I am today, here, with this college, because of the benefits, because of the retirement.

RS: [But the salaries are--?]

ANON: Well, and again, because I'm non-union at this point and I'm a confidential secretary, had I stayed in the union, I would've been probably back, salary-wise. I know I would have been back salary-wise.

RS: But overall, you feel that this experience that you've been through has essentially been negative, in terms of your material circumstances.

ANON: I've learned from it and through it.

RS: How did you feel [00:40:00] about this situation in general? And not just you, but looking at it in the larger picture. You're one example of millions of people in this country. What do you think about this?

ANON: I survived. I have a brother that can't survive. He's floundering. He's nowhere. (pause) Sometimes, it's the people's fault. Sometimes, they think a position is beneath them. A lot of the times, companies will not hire them because-- I mean, this is what we're up against, at this point, we have people with a huge amount of experience, no jobs. And people that are applying for lesser positions, and the companies won't hire them because as soon as, they know, as something better comes along, the person's going to leave. They're in a Catch-22 situation. [00:41:00]

RS: Or there are cases of people who -- for example, I've interviewed steelworkers who won't be hired because they were steelworkers and they're used to large incomes.

ANON: I worked with somebody at Easton Hospital who was a temp like me that came from Bethlehem Steel. She could not believe that she had to live on, quote, at that time, "\$6 an hour." And I looked at her and I thought, I was living on \$6 an hour. Why couldn't she live on \$6 an hour? I felt sorry for these types of people, but you know, Bethlehem Steel did not stay forever. (laughs)

RS: That's true, that's true. Do you think that since this situation has affected so many people in this country, something should be done about it? [00:42:00] Do you think, for example, that the federal government should encourage a, what is called, a sort of an industrialization policy?

ANON: Now see, this part I have not given much thought because, basically, quote, I'm "out of it," okay? I'm gainfully employed.

RS: No, but you've experienced it and your husband is in a situation where he's apparently also a victim of this.

ANON: The federal government -- and again, it's one o'clock and I could go on for another probably hour. (laughs)

RS: Do you want to?

ANON: I can't. Unfortunately, I have to get back.

RS: Okay, well why don't we just stop it at that point. Could we continue, at this another time?

END OF AUDIO FILE

Anonymous_19920408

RS: Go ahead.

ANON: It's the same thing -- well not the same thing, because this is not Japanese-type things that are taking over the casket industry. It's the big companies, in this instance, buying out the small casket companies. That industry that was in this area is no longer here. I mean, it's gone. I think it's frustrating to the average individual. What control does the average individual have over these types of situations? I don't know. How can you stop it? How can an average individual stop it?

RS: You think through political process, or don't you have much faith in that?

ANON: No. I don't have -- no.

RS: Why not?

ANON: Because what politicians say and what they end up doing are entirely two different things. You cannot take a politician on any truth. They just don't tell the truth, in my opinion. I don't know. I don't know what the answers are.

RS: Do you think the federal government should have programs to support re-industrialization, or to limit imports, for example?

ANON: Definitely to limit the imports. I don't know how they would accomplish it. I don't know how they would accomplish it. [00:02:00] What my husband is going through at this point, who would -- how would they help him? Other than give him total disability, which they won't do. But nobody will give him a job. I don't know the answers. I mean, my husband's in a situation -- it's a no-win situation. He is, fortunately, employed as a temporary. He has no benefits, but he is bringing home a paycheck.

RS: How long has this been going on?

ANON: Six years.

RS: Six years, he's been a temporary employee?

ANON: Now wait, it might -- no, I'm sorry, it's five. At the same place. And the company will not hire him. And they [00:03:00] really -- after he took his physical -- they will not hire him, but they will not give him a reason.

RS: They won't give him a reason?

ANON: No.

RS: Do you believe that there should be some legal measures to prevent this kind of thing? In other words, to prevent a company from following a policy like that?

ANON: Well, I don't know if legally, the company can get away with it at this point. Simply because at the office I work in, I know instances where people have been employed here that have the same condition that he has, and they were gainfully employed here, as a full-time employee.

RS: Let me ask you this question: is it harder to work now than it was [00:04:00], say, 15 years ago, 20 years ago, when you first started out? Is it harder to make a living? Is it more difficult to go to work and feel secure and go about a job?

ANON: Okay, when I went back to work, I went back to work for extras, "for the family," quote. It is no longer extras. It's a necessity. It's an absolute necessity that I work, in my case.

RS: And that's despite the fact that your children have grown up and gone.

ANON: Oh, definitely. Definitely, because I'm carrying the benefits.

RS: So you're essentially working for the benefits. Well, plus the salary.

ANON: Plus the salary. And like I said, we live very modest.

RS: Has your standard of living been affected over the last, say, 10, 15 years?

ANON: No, simply because [00:05:00] -- well I shouldn't say that. Yes. And in fact, we don't buy things new. We buy -- I shouldn't say -- we do buy a new car, now every 10 years instead of every six, etc., etc., and only when it becomes necessary. But I think this was our own -- we were our own -- we survived because we did not have lavish spending in the very beginning. And again, the people that have lived more comfortable than we have, have a very difficult time trying to--

RS: Make ends meet.

ANON: Exactly.

RS: So then you'd say that it is harder to make a living and live now. [00:06:00]

ANON: Yeah, I guess. Yes. And I'm just glad I have a job with benefits.

RS: Without mentioning the name of your present employer, how will you compare it to the previous employers?

ANON: The one that was -- you mean the one that was closed? Because then I worked at two temp--

RS: Yeah, I know you worked at two previous ones, but I'm talking about now.

ANON: Now. How would it compare in the job I have right now? Other than Taylor-Wharton, which was the best position, the best atmosphere, the best pay, etc., etc., this one is definitely second.

RS: But still not up to Taylor-Wharton.

ANON: No, but definitely second.

RS: So in other words, you [00:07:00] don't feel you've really progressed in terms of moving from one good job to--

ANON: Well, in a sense I have because the job I had was in industry, and I don't think any industry is offering what Taylor-Wharton did at that time. I don't think I would find an industry today what I had at Taylor-Wharton how many years ago. I'm in an entirely different environment now, and the pay was accordingly. But again, I was promoted, so I'm happy where I am.

RS: What happened to the other women who you worked with at Taylor-Wharton? Do you have any idea?

ANON: Okay, two went to Harrisburg. [00:08:00]

RS: To Taylor-Wharton Harrisburg?

ANON: Right. Two of them went to Harrisburg. One was my supervisor. They're both still employed in Harrisburg, but they have changed their positions around several times.

The had to become -- the one person ended up being a shipping and receiving individual, which is, quote, "usually done by a male."

RS: So actually, they downscaled their jobs.

ANON: They changed their jobs. And downscale? Possibly.

Possibly. The one they made the shipping individual -- I don't remember what she went out as. The one that was my supervisor went [00:09:00] out, I believe, as a supervisor out there. And I don't think it lasted long. They did put her in another slot. But I was out in the Harrisburg facility for about a week until they got set up. I was helping them out there. They're still there.

RS: So they actually did go on, then --

ANON: Oh yes. They're still there. That union took the concessions and they are still operating. Is there an easy answer? I don't think so.

RS: Well how would you describe your outlook for the future? Is it positive or negative?

ANON: I think--

RS: Hopeful, not very hopeful? [00:10:00]

ANON: I don't know where it's going to end. I mean, my husband was at the barbershop yesterday, Binney & Smith is now -- these poor middle-management people -- you either get laid off or you take an early retirement. This was yesterday in

the barbershop with Binney & Smith. This morning's paper, Ingersoll Rand just left how many, quote, "salaried" individuals go? The turnaround, if there's going to be a turnaround, is not going to happen quickly, I don't think.

RS: Yeah, you're probably right about that.

ANON: But as to how to do it? I don't know. I don't know.

RS: Is there anything you want to add at this point?

ANON: Just one thing. As I was sitting at my desk -- and of course, being in the position that I sit, I must be very tactful at all times; that's part of the job.

RS: Not like me.

ANON: (laughs) An individual came in for a job. I told him what was available. He completed an application. He handed it to me and I quickly scanned it and asked him a few questions. And it was one of the people that was in the union at Taylor-Wharton, and I wanted to look at this individual and say, "You stupid jerk." (laughs) You know? "If you people in that union had" -- ugh, we all would have possibly still been out there.

RS: They made concessions.

ANON: Exactly. Exactly. But here it is how many years later, and this man is looking for employment.

RS: Still looking.

ANON: He had worked -- from what I remember briefly -- he had worked several places, but it was the same thing, being laid off and being laid off.

RS: That's what we're finding, that a lot of men who were laid off in industrial jobs just sort of float from one place to the other.

ANON: One of the people I work with -- the temporary that's in the office -- her future son-in-law just got laid off from ITandT. But of course, he was one of those people that went in when the strike was--

RS: Oh yeah, he was hired as a--

ANON: Exactly, and who knows if they eventually were getting rid of these people or why.

RS: They're laying off--

ANON: He was just let go, so. Is anybody safe at this point?

[00:13:00]

RS: I don't know. I don't think so. I don't think so.

ANON: You feel you're working at an institution of education, but is it actually?

RS: Well, if the economy keeps going downward like it is, it's already--

ANON: I know.

RS: The students aren't going to come. And if the students
don't come-- [voices overlapping]

ANON: Part of my job is being affected by it with the temporary
help.

RS: Sure, sure. Okay, well thank you, [name redacted]. I do
appreciate it. Did you -- would your husband be willing to
talk?

END OF AUDIO FILE