

GarciaIsmael_20210425_video

JANINE SANTORO: (inaudible)

A: Okay, just (inaudible)

DELIA MARRERO: Hi Janine.

JS: How are you?

DM: He's coming over.

JS: Sure. [00:01:00] Me put the volume up. How are you feeling?

DM: Good.

JS: You're okay.

DM: Yeah. Here he is.

JS: Hi, Ismael. How are you?

ISMAEL GARCIA: Hello. My name is Ismael Garcia.

DM: Papa, give her a second. Give her a second.

IG: I just want to introduce myself first.

JS: I'm so happy that you're ready to go, Ismael.

IG: Always ready.

JS: All right. I'm just getting us set up here so I can record us, okay? Okay. This will just take a minute or two. How are you feeling today? Okay?

IG: Fine, thank you. You?

JS: Good. Can't complain. I'm so grateful to you for interviewing with us.

IG: It's no use to complain.

JS: Okay. [00:02:00] Let me just -- Let's see. Interview.

Full screen. Okay. Okay. I'm just trying to give us the best image of you as possible. You look great.

IG: Thank you.

JS: Now, let's see here. Okay. Are you on a laptop right now?

DM: Yes. Yeah, he is.

JS: Can we put the screen -- because I see you from the chin up. Can I see you a little [00:03:00] bit from the shoulders up? Perfect, yes, that's great. Thank you.

DM: Is that better?

JS: Beautiful. Perfect, perfect, thank you. And then let's see here. Okay. So, Ismael, just so you know, this interview is about 90 minutes. Is that still okay with you?

IG: Okay.

JS: And just to recap, this is for a digital archive. It's called Voces de la Comunidad: The Latinx Experience in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. And I gave Delia a consent form that, if that's okay if he just initial that second page and sign the third page, that kind of lets us have this interview as part of our archive. Are you still okay with that?

IG: I'm okay.

DM: Yeah -- over to you Monday, Janine.

JS: That's perfect. Yeah, we just [00:04:00] submitted the other interviews, so I'm so grateful that we have this interview as part of our community story. So, this is so very special. So, thank you to you and to Delia, especially too for organizing all of this. I'm so grateful to both of you. And so, if for some reason, Ismael, that the internet gets choppy or we can't hear each other, I'm going to make a sign like this. Do you see my hand?

IG: Yeah, I see the hand.

JS: Okay, and that'll just mean pause so that I can stop the recording, and we can try and figure out what's going on. And you can do the same thing to me. If you can't hear my question or if something happens, you can make that same stop sign, and we'll pause the interview, okay?

IG: Okay.

JS: Okay. And right now, we're going to start the official interview, and again, this interview, it's very laid back. It's very relaxed. So, I'm just going to ask you questions that go through your life story, and you can tell me as much [00:05:00] as you want or as little as you want, but it's all about you and your childhood going into your adult life and the experiences you have as a community leader in Bethlehem. Does that sound okay still?

IG: That'd be okay.

JS: Okay, wonderful. So, if it's all right with you, we're going to start the official interview now. Is that all right?

IG: Okay.

JS: Okay. So, hi, my name is Janine Carambot Santoro, and I'm here with Ismael Garcia. And it is April 25, 2021. Ismael is going to tell us about his life and experiences as a community leader in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania as part of the Latinx Oral History Project. Our project has funding from the Lehigh Valley Engaged Humanities Consortium, and today we are meeting through Zoom. So, Ismael, thank you again so much for your willingness to speak to us today. And to start, can you please state your [00:06:00] full name and spell it for me?

IG: My first name is Ismael, I-S-M-A-E-L, Ismael. Last name is Garcia, G-A-R-C-I-A.

JS: Perfect. And what is your birthdate?

IG: Eleven 23, 1928.

JS: Great, and I'm just going to ask you some questions that were also on your consent form that you have signed or that you will sign. The first is, do you consent to this interview today?

IG: Yes. Yes, I do.

JS: Okay. And so, you consent to having this interview being transcribed, digitized, and made publicly available online in searchable formats?

IG: It'd be okay with me.

JS: And do you consent to the [00:07:00] Latinx Archive using your interview for educational purposes and other formats, including films, articles, websites, and presentations?

IG: Yes.

JS: And do you understand that you will have 30 days after the electronic delivery of the transcript of this interview to review it and to identify any parts that you might want to delete or withdraw your interview from the project?

IG: Okay.

JS: Wonderful. So, thank you so much. I want to start with our first question, which is the beginning of any great life story, which is, where did you grow up, and what was is like growing up in your family?

IG: I was grow up in Humacao, Puerto Rico in 1928, like I told you before. [00:08:00]

JS: And what was it like growing up with your family? Who did your family consist of?

IG: Well, at the beginning, we are seven brothers and sisters, and two pass away before I came to this country. And my father was a veteran of the First World War. He was on the

Panama Canal when they was building that canal. My father was there.

JS: And so, what was it like growing up with your brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico? How would you describe the city and the places that you enjoyed being in and that you felt welcome in?

IG: Well, at that time, things were rough in Puerto Rico. Not only Puerto Rico, because [00:09:00] I saw picture in 1929 people get in line to get a bowl of soup in New York. So that's about the time I was born. And things were rough, very. But we have no complaint. Our father was, I always heard from my mother, die just when she had me and my youngest sister. And my father was a very good working person, very hard-working person, which for a while, (inaudible) almost everything.

JS: So how did that experience shape you growing up in Puerto Rico after the death of your mother and [00:10:00] I guess going to school with your brothers and sisters?

IG: Well, I only went to fifth grade for school. But I, at the age of 13 years, I went to work with a lady, a widow, and I used to work with her, and she used to provide me everything, and until 1951 when I came to New Jersey to work on the farm. That was my first time I came to this country.

JS: And so, when you came to New Jersey, what brought you to New Jersey? Did you come with other family, or did you know you were going to work on the farm when you came to New Jersey?

IG: See, I came along with four more friends. This is when the farmers [00:11:00] over here used to ask people that could work on the farm. And I came to work at the farm. I would say until from April maybe to September. And then I went back to Puerto Rico.

JS: So you worked on the farm in New Jersey, and then which part of New jersey was it?

IG: That was near Woodbury. Gibbstown used to be the town. Can't remember what -- Gibbstown in New Jersey near Philadelphia, not too near but near Philadelphia.

JS: So, you worked on the farm, and you returned to Puerto Rico. When you returned to Puerto Rico, was it going to be short-term? Did you plan on staying there, or did you plan on returning back to the United States?

IG: Well, [00:12:00] at that time I was only 22 years old. And I had a cousin that was living in Allentown. And he asked me if I want to come to Allentown. In 1952 I came to Allentown. I live in Allentown for one year working in the chicken poultry.

JS: And when you arrived in Allentown, living with your cousin,

what did you think of the community? Did you find it welcoming? Did you find it hard to adapt? What were your first impressions of being in Allentown?

IG: A beautiful town, especially at that time. Those year, those were a nice place to live, quiet and very, very, very nice city to live. [00:13:00]

JS: Did you find that you had other people from Puerto Rico or other people in the Latino community that you could trust that you felt provided community, or was it still, did you find yourself in a diverse population? Who were the people around you that you felt comfortable around?

IG: Well, my cousin and a friend of mine. The friend I used to knew at that time. I didn't know that one until I came to Allentown, but they were good friends and good people. And I still have problems with the English language, but at that time, I could hardly speak English. But then at that time, when you went to the store, they didn't have those shopping centers they have today. Or a Spanish product, they don't have that at that time. [00:14:00] I used to go to the store to buy, and I have to name everything I want by name. It's not like today. You go in the shopping center, and you have to speak English. You just pick things and pay for it, and but not at that time, when I came over here. And that's a way I learn English, watching

TV and reading The Morning Call newspapers.

JS: So, you were learning English, and you were working, and then how did -- I guess, what was the next step for you, as you were working? What did you imagine you wanted to do?

IG: Well, I want to -- I was not satisfied yet because I wasn't making enough money. And I was looking for a place, could I make a better salary, better money? [00:15:00] And then I came to Bethlehem 1953. And I fill my papers to work at Bethlehem Steel. At that time, Bethlehem Steel used to have over 30,000 people, and Bethlehem Steel is the second -- was the second largest steel maker in the United States. And then I got a job, Bethlehem Steel, and I work over there for 38 years. I work 40 years on this country. I work one year in New Jersey, one in Allentown and 38 in Bethlehem Steel in Bethlehem.

JS: And so, what was it like working in Bethlehem Steel?

IG: Okay, those were the year when you used to come today, [00:16:00] and tomorrow you was working in Bethlehem Steel already. Not anymore. But at that time, you didn't need a college degree to be well paid with good benefits and pension, everything. You got good benefits, and that's all right. I applied for a job from Bethlehem Steel, the benefits and the payment. But don't forget, at that time I used to make only one dollar an hour.

JS: And when you were working at Bethlehem Steel, did you feel like you were on equal footing with your other colleagues in terms of, I guess, being Puerto Rican in Bethlehem Steel, did you find there were any differences between you and other people that, I guess, had been born here and have grown up in Pennsylvania?

IG: See, when I get a job in the coke work, they have Mexican, [00:17:00] Spanish, Portuguese, colored people, and American people. I used to call it the United Nation.

JS: And did you find that was the space that was most comfortable to be able to work with others that were diverse that were also there for similar goals and similar purpose?

IG: Listen, at that time, they call that department I work for 512 department at that time, and they used to be hot, dirty, work. But I was thinking to better myself. That's why I stay there. Many of my friend, and not only my friend, but many people quit [00:18:00] because you have work three shift. And I was single at that time. Twenty-three, I was 23 already. And but I want to better myself, and see, in Bethlehem Steel they have a union. And then you got to go step by step what they call. According to your seniority, you can moving from job number one to job number 18, which I used to be when I last work at

Bethlehem Steel. I was working the top job.

DM: Tell them about your work with the union.

IG: Okay, I was a shop steward. I was elected by the workers of my department and became a shop steward. [00:19:00]

That means I was representing union. At that time Joe Horanzik used to be the president of the union, not the union, because the union, they have three locals, 2599, 2598 -- 2998, 2999, and 2600. I used to belong to the 2600. The president of the 2600 was Joe Horanzik, a very, very, very good person. And he instruct me. He gave me a book of the contract between the steel company and the union. And he instruct me what to do. Over there you have three step, what they call three step. When somebody came to you complaining that he was denied, you [00:20:00] got to go by seniority, but sometimes they used to put people with less seniority over people with more seniority. And that's when anybody came to me, I just went to the first step. I called immediately foreman. That was the job. As a shop steward, for me in the coke work, and then if he don't give me no answer, then I went to general foreman. That was the second step. And if he don't give me no answers, don't satisfy me, or I used to go to the superintendent. That was the last attempt. And the president of the union told me, "When you go to the third

step, tell them, if they don't agree with you, tell them to read the book. Tell them they have to go. Show them the book. You got to go by the book," I remember. [00:21:00] "And if you don't agree, then tell them, but let arbitrators decide then." If we don't agree, maybe I am wrong. Maybe you are wrong. Maybe you're right. Maybe I don't know. But if not, I'm very sure I'm right, but if not, then if you don't make a decision, then let arbitrator decide. That's the way the union used to do with the company. And 1959 it was the last strike they have in Bethlehem Steel. And I used to go in the picket line, and they last 119 days, as far as I can remember, 119 days on strike. Since that time, they agree not to go on strike anymore. From that time, they agree [00:22:00] to let arbitrators decide. Whatever the arbitrators decide, then they go by that. I have no more strike at that time until they close in 1995. I think 1995 was when they close the whole plant. They start closing department by department. And the coke works, which was my department, was one of the last that they close.

JS: Can you talk about the strike? Like, what was the purpose for the strike? What were the issues at hand?

IG: Oh, well, they were fighting for more vacation, raise, and many other -- many things like health benefits and all

that. There's many things that they were fighting for. I used to have 13 weeks' vacation when I have 30-year service. You to qualify [00:23:00] for 13 weeks' vacation you have to have at least 30 years of service. And that 13 weeks is not every year. That's in a cycle of five years. And then my fallen -- they didn't send everybody at the same time because they can't do that. They run out of operators, and they split first the people who is the most seniority go in their first year. Then the rest in the? second. I fall on the fourth year the first time. I fall into my seniority. And then the second time I fall upon the second year. So, I got 13 weeks two times, but that 13 weeks, I was entitled to six weeks that year, so they only give me seven more -- [00:24:00] I mean eight more, eight for 13 then. That's a way it used to be.

JS: And so, being a leader of the union, did you feel pressure to do certain things sometimes when you didn't want to, or did you find yourself oftentimes allied with your workers?

IG: Well, I was popular among the majority. Otherwise, they never would have select me as a representative. I went to Washington, DC for two weeks with OSHA, occupational safety and health. They started to implement that, clean air. Then I went over there. They send me over there. The union send me over there with about three more guys. That

was to answer question [00:25:00] from a federal judge, used to be in Washington, you know. They used to have three team from automobile company, Bethlehem Steel company, United State Steel company. And we had to wait two weeks until our turn came for our team from Bethlehem to wait until the federal judge answer question and explain them because they don't know what's going on. The judge don't know what's going on. So, we have to explain them the reason that we were over there and how were the conditions work where we used to work, which was a lot of dust, heat, fume, you name it. That was terrible to work over there. That's one of the reason [00:26:00] that OSHA, occupational safety and health, implement the clean air. And then when they came to inspect the place, and when they found that the company was not cooperating with them, doing what they told them to do, they used to give them some more -- when they find that they don't did what they want, so they used to give them so many days, so many days to fix the problem. And every day they used to fine them millions of dollar. That's one of the reason I've interview many times about Bethlehem Steel. And according what I believe, years ago, the cars were made of steel. Today the cars are make of fiberglass, rubber, [00:27:00] you know. They don't use -- even the buckets, everything is -- they have

to compete with plastic. Also, they have to compete with foreign countries. Those foreign countries, to make the steel cheaper, even Japan, after World War, which was 1945, they came with new technology. They build the steel faster, and they dump them on this country. So those company like Bethlehem Steel couldn't compete with them. And that's one of the reason that the company went bankruptcy, because they still operating with the old machinery, took longer to build the steel, expensive, and they couldn't compete with that company. [00:28:00] That was one of the things, but it's mainly the other thing I think they don't have the supervision they used to have at the beginning. See, that was a family affair we would call when they make foremans, you know. They don't go by qualified people. Because I went through all that. I live that. They don't pay the most qualified people to fill a foreman position. They just -- we used to come to work. You people named your family, family affair we used to call them that. But then we have to bring the people from Puerto Rico from the work department of Puerto Rico here in Bethlehem. We started a Puerto Rican beneficial society in 1952. Then from that, 1952 with Holy Infancy Church, Father [00:29:00] Campbell and one professor from Lehigh, we get together, and we build the Hispanic center,

concilio. I remember I wrote the first check, 500 dollars. And with Father Campbell -- I forgot the name of the professor -- then they get a place in front of the post office in Fourth Street, just a place to start it. And Blanca Smith, she used to work in community college.

DM: Northampton.

IG: Northampton Community College, she used to work there. And she was very active. And then one time we meet people from the Puerto Rican work department. [00:30:00] A guy used to come work a lot, and we complained to them. It's a long history. And then they, the headquarter, the police headquarter on the city hill used to be in the Southside. That was before they built -- Mr. Payrow build that, was the mayor when they built that. Anyway, we told our guy what -- we were a little bit discriminated, that they even knew we were citizens. And so, they make arrangement with the governor of Puerto Rico, and they took -- was Schaffer the mayor at that time, and the chief of police was Parker, Mr. Parker. And they paid them a trip to Puerto Rico so they can go over there for a seminar and learn [00:31:00] our customs, you know, our way of living. And when they came back, they came to our club. We meet with them, and I think that between Allentown, Easton, and Bethlehem, I seen the policeman in Bethlehem used to be the more -- they

treat us very fairly, you know, because we get to know through the mayors. And then we used to make banquets at the club. We used to bring the mayors over there between those mayors. Well, it's me, Pedro before. It's me, and we used to invite -- even Mr. Mowrer used to come to the -- he passed away not long ago. And we got a better connection, better understanding. We tried to get into the community and [00:32:00] know our way of living and, you know, it was -- everything change. At one time in south Bethlehem used to be Sears, Starbucks, Pep Boy, Goodman, Coleman. They didn't have those big shopping center they have today. And one time somebody stop some guy from -- boy, boy, he assault that person from Pep Boy. And they put on The Morning Call, on [the gloved hand?] they used to be before, [gloved hand?], which -- and they put that this person was a Puerto Rican. And we got [00:33:00] a lawyer, and that lawyer send a letter to the mayor of Bethlehem, the Allentown, Easton, and in the letter -- they give us that letter to us, and the letter said let's just stop this discrimination because one Irishman, one Russian, one person, you know, they don't say. And since that time they never use a Puerto Rican when mention somebody because now they use the word Latinos instead of Puerto Rican or Mexican or Portuguese. Because that's unfair. That's

discrimination when you name the -- especially when the people wasn't Puerto Rican. So that lawyer used to run for district attorney. He run. I forget his name, [00:34:00] but he never won. But he did a good job for us. He represent us, he advised. And since that time, everything change. Because we have Black people, white people, rich people, poor people. We have intelligent people, all kind of people like any country. And some people think that because we are Puerto Rican, we are a little dumb or something, you know. Well, we have our kind of people like any place. See, among the Hispanic people in United States, the Cuban people, Spanish community, are one of the more -- Latinos are Mexican, United States. [00:35:00] And I think Puerto Rican are second. But Cuban people are the better educated people that came to this country. When Fidel Castro went into power in 1959 and doctors, lawyers, engineers came to Miami, it's not like the Puerto Rican. I was a farmer, and, you know, we don't have the knowledge that you need to progress, you know. But those people, they were engine-- you go to Miami Beach, which I've been many times, and over there you have so many Cubans that they even have two senator Cuban; Menendez from New Jersey, Rubio, Cuban. And they have better representative in Washington than [00:36:00] we do. See, one complaint that

we have, Puerto Rican lives in Puerto Rico don't pay federal taxes. They don't pay no federal -- unless you work for the federal government. But you don't have no representation in Congress. And you're not allowed to vote for the president either. That's when you're living in Puerto Rico. And we are subject to the draft. When we make many arrangement with Bethlehem Steel executive, we brought them to Puerto Rican club, and we complained to them because they were discriminating in the coke work especially where most of the Hispanic people used to work. We claim that they -- when the Puerto Rican came to the employment office, they say, "Puerto Rican, coke work," [00:37:00] the worst department. In that meeting that we had with them, they told us, well, why don't you people learn English? You know what I told one of them? You want us to speak English to get a job, but then when there is a war, they don't ask if the Puerto Rican speak English, throw you the rifle. So, we bring that point to them, you know. And now -- and like I told you, don't forget, Puerto Rico can't votes for the president, and [not have?] representative in Congress. And it's advantage, you know, that we have, but people in Puerto Rican, they say, come on, Puerto Rico. I say come on, world. Just like Pennsylvania is. And [00:38:00] they got put on good

benefits from this country funds for road, schools, and all that. That's one advantage we have. Also, we are citizen, and we can come and go whenever we go. We have liberty. And I'm proud of that. I always say this is a great country of the world. I say myself, many occasion, but I, sometime I say it's not the country, the leaders this country, many of them, not all, that don't act in a way they should. And that's a different. But I always say this is the great country of the world. I'm proud to be a citizen of this country, and I think many of us Puerto Ricans are, like me, because not always everybody had (inaudible). [00:39:00] Yeah, but when I came over here, first thing I did was I registered myself to vote. I used to go house by house. I have a recognition in my house that Mr. Samuelson gave to me. You go to my house; I show it to you. I had him over there. And I used to make campaign for him, just like I did for Nancy Matos. Nancy, I registered one time 200 Puerto Rican people and I have that certificate, the appreciation they give me for that. And Mr. -- what's his name? McHale. Paul McHale. When he came to the club -- he used to come to the club campaigning, when he run [00:40:00] the first time and he told us that if I win, I'm gonna hire two Puerto Ricans to work in my office. And he told that to us, and he promised

that, and he did it. When his inauguration in the capital, he invite me, he invite Nancy Matos, he invite Martin [of the?] Allentown. He invited a couple people from -- and I have picture in my house with him when I went to Washington D.C. So, he promised something, and he did it, he complied. And then, another thing I did over here, I played class A in Puerto Rico, 1949. Class A baseball. When I [00:41:00] came over here, I run the first Puerto Rican club in Bethlehem, two leagues; church league, which played from Monday to Friday, and tri-county league, which played Saturday and Sunday. I used to coach that team, and I have picture in my house because we got American people to play with us, not only Puerto Ricans. We hire everybody that could play good baseball, it doesn't matter what nationality. I have a picture in my house of that, of that team. And then, like I told you, in 1991 I retired from Bethlehem Steel. But [00:42:00] they have a heating department, the coke work, heating department. The heating department is the people that take temperature of each oven and regulate the temperature and make the [list of oven to be pushed?]. At that they time, they used to put anybody they want to, but they didn't put no Puerto Rican. They don't make no Puerto Rican foreman either. So, we complained to the Bethlehem Steel about that, and they set

up a meeting for us. And over there, I been the seniority list because the union, we got seniority list with the years of service of each worker. And I brought that list to them, and I count all the Puerto Ricans at that time, were 80-some Puerto Ricans and they only got one foreman. So, we say that they should hire more foreman, [00:43:00] you know. And then, they did it, they did after that. They hired more foreman, more Puerto Rican foreman. And also, they denied us to get to that department, which we are allowed to do. They put people in less seniority. We start fighting with the union, and then they have to -- they told us that we needed high school to do that job, which wasn't true about that. Cause we prove it. Then what they did was they give you a test. I took the test for heater and I passed the first for first year helper, and then for heater. And then what they did is, when we keep complaining about so many people -- not only Puerto Ricans, but all workers with more seniority didn't get [00:44:00] that opportunity to go to that department. And what they did was they told us they was gonna train the people with that job, starting with the people with the most seniority. They promised all that and they did it. Many, many, many, many, many workers benefits out of that program. They used to train six months for the job I did,

I used to work, heater. I used to make the list of the oven to be pushed, control the temperature of the battery. Many, many things that you -- as a heater, you are the person that are in charge of a battery. A battery used to -- they used to have 80 ovens, 106 ovens. They had five batteries, and they all are set up different, you know.

[00:45:00] But I work hard for that. And I became a heater, which was class 18 and 17. My stepson, Tommy [Morero?] used to be electrician there, and his classification was 16. Mine was 17 and 18. And the (inaudible) classification with the salary that they pay you, according with the class. And I was 17, 18. That was the highest in the coke work, the highest classification. But I took the test. Yes, I took the two tests to become a heater. I passed the test because I keep making questions with the people that work on the job and then I learned that way. I passed the test two times. [00:46:00] But I'm glad I got that job in Bethlehem Steel because like I told you before, it was a place just like Max, PP&L. They hire you, you went to the employment office and today, like I told you before, and tomorrow they call you. No more after that because they went down, down, down, down until they close the plant.

JS: So, you mentioned you retired in 1991 and you also

mentioned your stepson, Tommy. So, at what point did you begin a family? And what was that like, to start your own family in Bethlehem?

IG: Okay. I get married in 1953 the first time [00:47:00] in the Holy Infancy Church. I was not Catholic, and they -- father was Spanish father at that time, and he advised me, and he told me the way that I have to do otherwise they wouldn't marry me in the church at that time. Things change. I went to the concilio -- I went to the -- how do they call that? To take classes and religion in the Holy Infancy Church.

JS: Confirmation? maybe?

IG: No, it was -- how do they call that? Concilio. Concilios they call that. You go for three days with other people, and they teach you how to become a Catholic. [00:48:00] Tell you about the Bible, tell you the rules and regulations the church have. And I went for three days for that. I still remember the Holy Infancy Church. Okay, I get married there in 1953, and I baptized my two kids, one girl, one boy that I had. But then I get divorced. In 1967, I divorced. And I married my wife that I have now in 1969, but we don't have no kids because she had three kids, and I have one kid and one daughter myself of the first marriage.

JS: And so, you mentioned [00:49:00] like a really rough schedule at Bethlehem Steel, like three shifts and it was just very tough working conditions. So, what was the experience like raising your family during those years? What was the family dynamic like? What was it like raising children that didn't grow up in Puerto Rico, but grew up in Bethlehem?

IG: Well, like I told you, I make one dollar an hour, but I only paid 45 dollars for my apartment. And then I bought my first house in 1958 in front of Donegan school. So, my kids only have to cross the street to go to school. In 1958 I bought my first house. And my [00:50:00] kids, one was graduated of high school, he used to work for PP&L but then he messed everything up (inaudible). He lose the job with PP&L, which was a good company to work, too. I used to say Max and PP&L, UGI those -- even the school district is one of the best places for you to work, according with the education you have, according with the school you had, the training. But for people like me, ordinary people, I was in labor, but Bethlehem Steel was the best place for you to hire. But then another thing we did was that we complain about, like I told you before, that when you came to the employment office, [00:51:00] they used to tell you Puerto Rican, coke work. And we complained about that.

And also, I forget the year, I talked to a Mexican lady that used to work when the First World War -- Second World War, she used to work at Bethlehem Steel. At that time woman, they used to work there, but when the war finished, those people that went to war, they don't lose their job. They have to hire them, and they fire the woman and give the job to the people that went to war, the soldiers that came back. And they did that, Bethlehem Steel. And I forget the year, when I was a shop steward, they hired in the 60s, [00:52:00] they hired a woman [by accident?]. They didn't wanna hire woman, but then the government forced them to do that. And they was -- you discriminated against women, and they hired about 13 womans one time. And they fired three Puerto Rican girls. And I took the case with the union and we complained the reason. Why did they -- they claimed that their work was too hard for them, they couldn't do the job. And we say well, the company's big, you not only have jobs in the coke work, you have jobs up above, and they hired them back again. We told them that we were going to complain to the Puerto Rican department work, and they hired the three women again. [00:53:00] And they bring them up above. But there was one time for many years that you never -- since I started in 1953, I never see a woman working in the coke work before,

until the 60s, that was when Luther King started to march, to demonstrate. And that's when things start to change, when Luther King started to march. And I think everything -- I've seen everything change pretty much because of that guy. I used to say Mandela in Africa and Luther King in this country, they did a good job by protesting [00:54:00] and they fought for the people. And this country there was a time when woman can't vote, they had no right to vote, don't forget. And Latinos and womans are from the minority group, not matter whether they are American or whatever. In this country the women are considered be minority group, in the minority. And I think after Luther King -- I've seen many, many, many things, that was in the 60s, I think. And one thing I do before, I rather don't have a cup of coffee and have the good newspaper and the news, I always [00:55:00] watch news and read newspaper and you know. And that way, you know what's going on. You learn and that's what I've been doing.

JS: And so, so you mentioned Martin Luther King and these movements that have made I guess progress for people that are considered minorities.

IG: Absolutely.

JS: When you look at things today, would you say that we have advanced a lot in our local community? It seems like you

were at the forefront of all these really wonderful changes.

IG: Yes, yes, in Bethlehem especially. When they had the police headquarters and the city [00:56:00] hall in the Southside before they built that, which was the mayor that built that was when they built that, Payrow. Mr. Payrow was the mayor when they built that new -- but with the Latino, Puerto Rican and all community, Spanish, Latino, growing up and being introduced, going to school with other races, I think it's a better understanding now than the time I came in here. Because I said they get along much better than when I came here. But one time they told me that all races, starting with the [00:57:00] Irish, Italian, they all went through what we went through. They were discriminated, too, by (inaudible) or whatever. But they had the same problem we had. But I'm now very happy that the Latinos over here -- I think, and that's of my opinion -- have a better chance opportunity than we had. Because, like I told you, I didn't speak no very few words in English. I can speak a little better now. Also, when the asbestos, when the DiAngelo's file a suit against the Bethlehem [00:58:00] Steel -- no Bethlehem Steel, the asbestos company, they have hearings over there, and they invited me to over there and testify in those hearings.

Asking me about the asbestos, what effect it have, why they use the asbestos. All that and that was the DiAngelo's lawyers that were Mr. Lamont. Lamont was the one that called me to interview and asked me, and then they meet with the asbestos company, cars company, cigarette I think, too, and they had the meeting in Mr. Lamont, Jonah Lamont now is the -- Lamont now he's the -- [00:59:00]

DM: Northampton County Executive.

IG: Huh? What's that?

DM: Northampton County.

IG: Northampton County Executive. I meet him and I took her to Easton one time one girl called me on Easton, if I wanna come to Easton. They interviewed me first, then she called me one time that they were going to have some activity, inauguration, I think. In Easton remember?

DM: Uh-huh.

IG: And I took her with me and I meet Mr. -- over there, Mr. Panto. I meet the -- and I went over there and they put me my picture there in Easton. They got my picture there. In interview they made me before. And the lady that called me, I talked to her on the telephone, and I don't know how we mentioned [01:00:00] his father's name, and his father used to play on my team. Father used to play on my team. I meet him over there too, remember?

DM: Yep.

IG: I see him. He was a general manager -- you know when the railroads cars come on the tracks, they put those cars on the -- they transfer those on the rigs and that was his job, that was his job over there. He was a general manager over there. But he used to play with my team, and very nice [pitcher?]. Mike Saya is his name, Mike Saya. And I bring him to the Puerto Rican club one time [01:01:00] before he married, when he got a girlfriend. And the lady that talked to me, they say hey, that's my father. Well, he played with me. Wow, I want you to meet him when -- I met him over there when I went over there. Very nice guy. We have a couple American people working our team and I have picture in my house of my team, baseball team. So, I've been involved in many, many, many things in the community. And I wish I would have I went to schools, but I couldn't afford to go when I came over here because I had to work three shifts, then I was married, then I bought a house and then probably hard for you to go to school and work. Very, very hard. But I [01:02:00] am glad that I worked for Bethlehem Steel because see, right now, when Bethlehem Steel went bankrupt, the federal government are paying us. The federal government today force those companies that have so many employees to put money in a

fund in case the company go bankrupt. Then the federal government pay me my pension, not Bethlehem Steel. There is no more Bethlehem Steel. I'm lucky because that happened not so long ago. If that would've happened before, Bethlehem Steel went bankruptcy, we would've lose everything. We lose funeral benefits, we lose health benefits, and we lose (inaudible). But the federal government took over the pension system and they're [01:03:00] the ones that are paying us now. And when I was going to retire - I retired at 62 years old - at that time they only paid 80 percent of social security. And I want to retire at 62. I had a good job. I have three helpers, one the 24 hours and the other during day shifts for certain job that we do. I need them to help me and do the jobs. And I have my first little helper with me and he told me when I told him I'm gonna retire, he told me no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Don't do that, don't do that, you're gonna stay three more years and you get 100 percent from Bethlehem Steel, and you get 100 percent from social security he told me. [01:04:00] I told him, don't tell me that because you know I have (inaudible) every day and they asked me about that. So, I don't know about that. But if you guarantee me that I'm gonna live 63, 64, 65, I might stay. Also, I've been working since I was 14 years, so I

said no, no, no, no, no. I have my house paid off, my car, everything. I have 401(K) plan, I have a couple savings in (inaudible) and I said that's -- I was only fill papers to work with coal district. I took them to my house and [Atlanta?] too. Part time, you know. But I say no, no, no, I'm gonna play dominos to el concilio. You know we play dominos in the concilio every day, and that (inaudible). Money is not everything [01:05:00] in life. It's a big help, but it's not everything. Like I told my helper that listen, if you guarantee me that I'm gonna live -- there is people that retire that I knew them, that they didn't even get the first check, you know. And I don't want to be one of them I told him. But that's why I retired at 62. It's been 31 years, no? Now, in January. So, imagine all the money that I get out of this social security fund. I think the baby boomers -- I don't know much about that now -- but I think the baby boomers are not going to get the 80 percent when they reach 62. I don't think so. Eighty percent from social security. I think they're gonna [01:06:00] have to wait more years, 65 maybe to get -- I'm not sure how much now because I don't know how much I get. But I think the baby boomers are gonna have to -- they're not gonna get the same benefits than the people that were born I think before the '45, I think.

JS: And so, congratulations. Thirty-one years retired, that's very exciting.

IG: I'm afraid of the young generation because they gonna think this old person, he don't gonna left nothing left for us on this fund. He's been getting so much out of the fund. Yeah, I'm gonna be 93 this year. [01:07:00] Ninety-three years.

JS: And so, right now you're 92. And when you look at Southside Bethlehem or just Bethlehem in general, where do you see that we need to improve still in 2021? What could we be doing for the Latino community and what could we be doing as a whole to be more welcoming and inclusive for people that come here?

IG: Housing. One of the things we need. Not only Latinos, but -- see what happened, the Lehigh University has been buying houses and renting them to students, so people that try to get an apartment, they can't because one reason they -- but we need, I think more and [01:08:00] more housing, especially for people that -- today you're gonna look for an apartment, it's so expensive, but people can't afford to. They can't afford to. And that's one thing I think Bethlehem need, more housing.

JS: And so, do you worry -- you have built such wonderful places for our community to be welcomed into, so Puerto

Rican Beneficial Society, Hispanic Council, you had the baseball team. Where is your hope? Where does your hope lie? Are there specific people that you see doing really wonderful things, and are there certain areas where you do see growth for our community? [01:09:00]

IG: Well, after Bethlehem steel, the casinos was a good thing to build because they hire a lot of people. Not like a steel company, but they hire a pretty many people, the casinos. Also, Latinos and Puerto Ricans, they born over here, they raised over there, they not have the problems of language, they have the chance to study school. Many don't take this advantage, but it's a good advantage that we didn't have when I came over here. Because the language, it was very hard for us to... [01:10:00]

JS: And so, where do you see the future of these places that you've built? So, the Puerto Rican Beneficial Society, how do you imagine the future of some of these --?

IG: See with this pandemic now, everything being change. Like our club now, we have to close the -- probably we gonna lose the club. The concilio -- see our club we start like our club like a non-profit organization, which is the Hispanic Council is a non-profit organization. Which don't pay no taxes, but we have half non-profit, and the other half is profit. So, we have to pay for [01:11:00] property

tax, insurance and you know that, we have tax to pay. And also, nobody work like I -- we used to be volunteer, we used to be volunteer. Otherwise, we never would've bought that building and fixed the building because they had pretty many volunteers. Today in the club, you don't have that volunteer that we used to have. Everybody want a salary. Security guards, bartenders, the steward, they all want salary, and we don't have that (inaudible) at the beginning. So, that's what we make a progress, that we bought our own building. We took a loan, put a [01:12:00] down payment on that building in the Puerto Rican Club. And about four (inaudible), we signed for that loan. That was 1952 that we started the society. Nineteen fifty-two, that's when we started to organize people. And it's not easy to organize people. You have to be trust for them and be united and otherwise you don't (inaudible) but it's not easy to organize people. But we did it, we organized people. We have a sick benefit plan, and we have our club paid off for the years and years, central air condition, we put a new bar over there and we make many improvements through the years. But new [01:13:00] generation, they don't think -- another thing is that the kids that born over here, they to tend to like better American music, which we have Spanish they prefer to that or don't belong

to club because they are a different society than we [than we were?] when we came in here. So, that make a big change. But this pandemic, there has been make a big damage, not only in -- but in many, you know, places. Small business and all that and you know, and we still in that sit-- almost. We receive that money that they give to us. [01:14:00] I think that a lot of help and the unemployment, too. They help the people on the unemployment that they have no more collection to make. And the federal government help people a lot, I think, during that time.

JS: And see, you mentioned a little bit about the new generation, you know, liking American music and just being different. And so, I guess, how do you envision for them -- what does it mean for them to have Puerto Rican identity? So, for you, you were born in Puerto Rico, and you came here, and you worked your adult life here. For our generation that has come here and they were not born in Puerto Rico, [01:15:00] what is your advice as to how they can identify or how they can find themselves living predominantly in the mainland of America and not in Puerto Rico?

IG: First of all, I tell them to stay in school and go as far as they can. When you study, when you get a well-paid job,

that's the way you progress; by going to school, staying in school. We have many a percentage who drop out. That don't help the Hispanic community. But my advice to them is to stay in school and go as far as you could. My nephew's a doctor. He's working in Walter Reed Hospital now. He went to the reserve, military reserve, [01:16:00] first he -- then they loaned him money and he studied medicine. He came to New York, and now he's working in Walter Reed Hospital in Maryland, that's where he's now working. And it's a big help for him. And he told me that he owe a lot of money, but it's worth it because he's paying, you know, little by little and he help himself, too. I wish many what the Puerto Rican new generation do that, you know. Try to take advantage of all the benefits that you have when you stay in school. That'd be my advice for them. And to behave. Don't make no problems, you know. When you don't make no problems, [01:17:00] it's a good thing to do. But you gonna get in drugs and drinks and -- well, you can drink a weekend beer, but when you get in this other kind of drugs, you get hook up and when you don't have the money to buy them, many people have to steal from their father, their mother you know, when they don't give them the money. This case have been happening. And that's just spoil your whole life when you do something

like that. And main thing, like I tell them, stay in school and take advantage of all the programs they have today. And then you could do a better life for you and your family if you get married or whatever. [01:18:00] This would be my advice for them, the new generation. And nothing comes easy in life. If you don't want to study, stay in school, you gotta work hard then. Nothing falls from the sky, like I told them in Spanish. If you want to stay in school, you have to work hard. You don't wanna go in the school, then you have to work hard too. Take your choice. And then you have a better life.

JS: And finally, is there anything that we did not cover so far in this interview that you would want to share with someone watching? [01:19:00] It could be anybody watching, students or, you know, people in Pennsylvania or people outside of Pennsylvania. What would you want them to know about your life or about our community? Is there anything else?

IG: Well, I don't have the mentality that I used to have. I forget many things that I don't forget when I was young. And also, the English that I learn in Puerto Rico, I learned that from teachers that they couldn't speak English. And they teach you English with a limit. And they used to like -- they used to tell me "water," they used to tell me "potato," and when I came over here and

they tell "wadder," "potado," I couldn't get it.

[01:20:00] And at that time, they don't teach you enough English, which was very important. Because at that time you can only went to school maybe four hours a day. That's all. Maybe three hours, that's all. And it's not enough time for them to teach you many things, many subjects. And when I came over here, I have that barrier, but I gonna try, I gonna try, I gonna try. Another thing many people are afraid to speak English because they figure they don't understand me, but you have to try. The English I learned is the one when I get involved [01:21:00] with American people; people that speak English. Because I learn from them. Or I learned from them, that's the way I learned. And you have Europe, you have French, Spain, Italy, Germany, and the language they speak is easier for us than English language. English language is not easy to learn. For us, it would be easy to learn Italian or French or even German. Not Chinese because that's -- (laughs) to learn Chinese or to write Chinese, I don't know. That's very difficult. But that's why in Europe, many people [01:22:00] speak two, three languages. Because they very close, very similar. And that's why they speak couple languages, many people from Europe. But English language, it's not easy, no, no. That's what I told this Bethlehem

Steel executive that went to our club for a meeting with us. They want us to bring them the problem we have, and when they told us that you people have to learn English, I told him listen, if you go today, I told him, if you go today to Germany or Italy or France or to Chinese, you think next year you gonna speak -- I mean, it's not easy to learn a language I told him. We're trying to do [01:23:00] our best and be responsible and good worker, but learn a language is not easy. It's not as easy like you think. But I'm proud to be citizen of this great country. I live over here -- I never would've lived the life I live over here if I were to stay in Puerto Rico. Because there was not enough chances and too many opportunities to work. I worked in San Juan, in one hotel in San Juan. One of my first jobs was on San Juan. In one hotel over there, I worked over there for maybe a year. They paid me 12 dollars a week, I remember. [01:24:00] And they give me a uniform and I was part of the kitchen, and they give me a uniform. They give me meals and everything, so 12 dollars at that time. But I say well, it's nothing like, you know, other jobs that I can find that I make more money or a better living. But when I came to New Jersey, I stayed there for about six months there, and not Sunday off or Saturday or holidays off. Just Bethlehem Steel too. When

you work for Bethlehem Steel, there is no social holiday that you are off, and you have to work three shifts, which was hard for me. Took me a long time to get used to work three shifts. Especially night shifts was rough. But I stayed, I said I'm gonna stay here. [01:25:00] Sooner or later it get better for me when I became a heater man. Then see, OSHA forced the company to stop the pollution, you know. The air pollution. And then they put the air condition in the machines. And when I work, I used to have condition, but that cost them -- that's one reason too, that the federal OSHA pushed them a little bit hard in a short time. Like I told you, they keep operating with the old machinery, and those foreign countries and foundries make the steel from scrap and that an advantage for the steel company. And that's why they (inaudible) administration, they [bake the wheels?] like we call them, [01:26:00] they used to take care of other models they got. They don't care about anything else. And that's why I think the first leaders of the steel companies like Bethlehem, I think were more smarter than the later administration they had.

JS: Well, thank you so much for sharing your story with us --

IG: Were there any other questions (inaudible)?

JS: No, not unless there's something else you'd like to share.

This was incredible.

IG: According to my acknowledge. But that's all I told you, according to my acknowledge and what I know about, but by living here -- I'm going to be almost 70 years. But I've been very lucky to reach that age, [01:27:00] too. And I thank the Lord for keeping me here. And also, I've been in good health, too, which is very important. It's something that you can't buy with money, is health. Or hair. You cannot buy these two things. (laughter) You can buy a wig, but it's not the same. I used to tell that to the people. You know, money's not everything. It's a great help, but it's many things you cannot buy with money, and health is one of them. And hair, too. I used to tell the girls that came to the center to take temperature, nurses, I used to tell them that and they laughed. Yes well, [01:28:00] that's all I have, in case you need any other information. But in my house, I have, like I told you, there is a book that they wrote over here, a history, Antonison something his name was. He wrote that book. I don't have the book with me, but I think the daughter of my friend that passed away, she had that book. But it's not -- they only wrote so much, little. Now Mr. Parks, the guy that invent the Musikfest, Freddy Park. He interview me too. He interview me and he wrote a book, Stronger than Steel. And they

invite me to the museum [01:29:00] over here. And I went over there, I read the book. They had the book over there. I tried to buy the book, but they ran out. And I went to buy it at the library on Main Street. But then I went to the museum, and they had the book over there. And the people he thanked, he put me my name that book too. Also Moravian one time they went and took pictures in the center, and he put my picture too, Moravian, there.

DM: Moravian College.

IG: Moravian College, uh-huh. And only thing, they have a place over here in Bethlehem near the Banana Factory. You know what the Banana Factory is? Okay. If you take a look there, they have a small park over there and they have the name of the people that work at [01:30:00] Bethlehem Steel on a brick. The name is there. And I never want to put my name there. They told me if I want. I tell them, no, that's okay. I didn't put my name there. Many of my friends have their name over there. But I decide not to have. But I was a union person, I believe pretty much in the union, but sometimes I pushed the union to, you know, I pushed them to do things that sometimes I believe they don't doing. And sometimes I used to tell them, I don't know what's going on under the table, you know that's what I complaining. I'm not sorry (inaudible) here, I'm not

sorry for that. And I put pressure on them too. But then I get very well along with him, especially with this president of the 2600, Joe Horanzik. [01:31:00] I learned a lot from him. I learned a lot from him. He used to tell me, don't argue with the foreman over there. Don't do that, don't do -- and that stick in my head, I said okay, I won't do. Don't do it, no. Carry the book. He gave me the book (inaudible) and show them the book, tell them they gotta read the book. In that book they had article 14. We say if a worker think he's assigned to a job and he think he's not safe, he can refuse. But he told me oh, you have to tell them. Put article 14, and they can't say him no. We did that. Until they sent people from the union and people from the company and inspect the place and make sure the place is safe. But we have a couple [01:32:00] we filed article 14 couple times. But the superintendent they had the last time in the coke work is still alive. He's a nice, very nice fellow. Nice people. He make meeting every year of the coke workers and from supervision, he's in charge of that. Very good person. I never have problems. But then, because of this pandemic, they suspend that for now for a while until things get better now. Hopefully, because it's not getting [01:33:00] much better now, you know, that when it started. And many people don't

want to get the shot. Many people still don't want to because even after you get the two shots, you should use the mask then. But I got the two shots, I got the two shots and my wife too. And too many people have feeling, bad feelings, but nothing happened to me and my wife. But still many, many people don't want to get the shot. And that don't help, you know. That don't help. But thank you very much for your interview [01:34:00] and like I told you, I'm telling you what I believe happened when I came over here. When I was a 22-year-old kid. Without education, you know, just fifth grade. And my last fifth grade, I went to school nighttime the last time before I came to New Jersey. That place, Gibbstown, is near Camden, near Camden, over there someplace. I never went back over there.

JS: Well, we are so grateful for your story and your advocacy [01:35:00] and your legacy that you have here in Bethlehem. I mean, there's nothing that can replace that. We are so grateful to you and for sharing that with us today. So, thank you.

IG: I am so glad that I could help whoever needs help at that time. And that's a way I've been like that, you know. Somebody need help that I think I can help with; I be willing to.

JS: I think many who listen to your story will also feel the same way. We'll feel that urge to help and to keep progressing.

IG: I'm glad that. And like when I lived in Allentown in 1952, if any Puerto Rican tell me that he live over there, I would ask him where were you that I [didn't get to do that?]. [01:36:00] Because there was very few. Bethlehem, too. We get to knew everybody. If somebody tell me, I live on Bethlehem that year, and I don't know him... Not now, but if he came over here in the '50s, I would -- because I used to go to clubs, and bars, and all over that place. And I get to knew in Allentown almost every Puerto Rican. Not now. In Allentown I think in the school district they have more than 40 percent of the --

DM: Seventy.

IG: Seventy. [Fue baja?].

DM: Allentown.

IG: Allentown. Imagine they have more -- and Allentown have maybe 100 and some residents. Bethlehem maybe 75, [01:37:00] something like that. But now not only Puerto Rican, but you got Dominicans, Colomb-- all kinds of Latinos over there that came later. You know, I read in the Morning Call the deeds of the houses, I read at the Allentown Lehigh deeds and I was surprised how many Spanish

people buying houses in Allentown. Because many people from New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, places where, you know, they come over here looking for better place to live. And that's why you have so many Spanish people buying houses. And things have changed a lot since I [01:38:00] came over here, but I think in the future it's gonna change more about the population. But Puerto Rico, they're trying to make Puerto Rico the state of the United States. And they have those elections. Maybe about three times people vote not to. Because you don't pay no federal taxes, you have advantage and disadvantage. If you don't pay no federal taxes, they have good -- this country give Puerto Rico funds, a lot of money and that and they like the way they living now. They have freedom. They can come whenever they want, go back and forth. And they vote many times against [01:39:00] becoming a state, they don't want to be for many reasons. I don't know about that. They vote against being a state. I think the last time they vote in favor of being a state, but to become a state, that doesn't mean -- because they make those elections and people vote to become a state, that doesn't mean that you are a state. That has to go through the Congress, the president. You know, they can tell you no, we gonna leave you people a -- and we gonna exclude you. And this is [not

the way?] because you vote, they gonna give it to you. But at least you can try. But people don't want, the majority don't want that. Especially the new generation, they don't want. They wanna keep their culture. They proud of that, you know. But [01:40:00] in Puerto Rico, the last storm, they make a lot of damage on the island and earthquakes now, too. In the South of Puerto Rico. Your last name's Santoro.

JS: Yes, that's my married name. My maiden name is Carambot. My family's from the Guaynabo area in Puerto Rico.

IG: Don't you speak Spanish?

JS: It's like Spanish and English, like Spanglish. (laughs)

IG: Spanglish.

JS: [01:40:55] Pero estoy tratando.

IG: (inaudible) No lo sabía que tu hablas Español. [01:41:00]

JS: Un poco.

IG: Si hablo (inaudible)

JS: Estoy tan agradecida por tu tiempo.

IG: ¿Vives aquí en Bethlehem?

JS: En Northampton, pero yo trabajo en Bethlehem.

IG: ¿Dónde en Bethlehem?

JS: En la biblioteca municipal. So, on Fourth Street and Webster, the library there.

IG: Sí, yo vivo en el township.

JS: Okay, okay.

IG: Puedo votar por el mayor de la ciudad. Yo no puedo votar por lo (inaudible). Estoy en Bethlehem township. Yo no puedo tener (inaudible). [01:41:46]

JS: Yeah, I'm still learning about all the lines, like all the city lines and where things end and begin. It's a little confusing coming from New Jersey. I'm from Jersey, too, so. (laughs)

IG: Many [01:42:00] people that work at the banks and places like hospital, they come from New Jersey or New York. I've been living here for almost 70 years. It's a long, long, long, long time.

JS: Well, I will tell you, when we interviewed our other Latino leaders, a lot of them mentioned that we needed to talk to you. And so, you are one of the first names that comes out of everyone's mouth when we talk about progress and how much our --

IG: Our history.

JS: Yes, and how much our Latino community has contributed, you are the biggest name that has come up. So, again, I want to thank you and I want to honor your time because I told you 90 minutes, and I know it's a beautiful Sunday and your wonderful [01:43:00] granddaughter, Delia, has set this up for us. So, thank you for interviewing through the

computer, too, through Zoom, 'cause I know that can be difficult. So, thank you, thank you.

IG: It's [very thing?] that don't come (inaudible) now that --

DM: Wrap it up. (laughs)

IG: Okay. Okay, okay. I'm finished.

DM: You finished? Okay.

IG: See?

JS: Well, much love to both of you, I'm so grateful. Delia was also interviewed because she's a community leader and her name was also brought up multiple times by our community. So, you've led with a good example.

IG: Well, I know pretty well Olga --

JS: Olga Negrón?

IG: Olga Negrón and Nancy Matos. I helped Nancy since she started. I knew her since she (inaudible). His father, his family. I know [01:44:00] Nancy --

DM: He knows everyone.

IG: She's a nice girl. And I used to go everyday house by house when she was running the last time. Now she told me -- I told her to run for mayor the last time I was talking to her. No, no, no, the last time she wanna quit as a judge and I told her, don't do that, don't do that. Okay. She told me now, I listen to you that time, but not this time. She jokes a lot with me and not this time, I

don't... Well thank you very much, and nice to meet you.

JS: Wonderful to meet you too, Ismael. We'll be in touch. I will contact you again through Delia.

DM: Okay, great.

IG: Do you think I speak fairly well English?

JS: Yes, extremely well.

IG: Extremely. Not extremely, but.

JS: You have nothing to worry about. This interview was clear.

IG: Okay. [01:45:00] Okay, see you.

JS: Take care.

DM: Thank you.

JS: Thank you, Delia, so much.

DM: You're welcome.

JS: Take care.

DM: Bye-bye.

END OF AUDIO FILE