

Paul Martinez

RICHARD SHARPLESS: This is an interview with Paul Martinez --
not "Mar-teen-ez" -- Paul Martinez, 204 Rock Street,
Easton, Pennsylvania. It's July 20th and it's
approximately 7:35 in the evening.

RS: Okay. Okay, first question --

MARTIN DESHT: Don't forget what he said outside. That's a very
good statement.

RS: He said outside?

MD: You spent a third of your life in the factory.

PAUL MARTINEZ: A third of my life, and I loved it.

RS: And you loved it, okay. Loved the people.

PM: Yeah, the people.

RS: Loved the people. Okay. Mr. Martinez, how old are you?

PM: 54.

RS: 54. Okay, where are you from?

PM: Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

RS: Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. And you lived all your life in
this area?

PM: In the Lehigh Valley. I moved to Easton when I was three
years old.

RS: And where did you go to school?

PM: [Shaw?] Junior High and Easton.

RS: Easton High School? Okay, what year did you get out of high school then?

PM: Fifty-five. [00:01:00]

RS: '55, okay. Same age as me. Same year that I got out. What happened when you got out of high school? What did you do then?

PM: Well, when I got out, I had a problem. My mother had [money?], my stepfather left for a while, and then instead of me finishing school, I went to start out at the Strongwear Pants Company in 1955.

RS: Right out of school, you went into Strongwear Pants. And what did they do?

PM: They brought me out as a floor boy. And I remember, 75 cents an hour. My take-home pay was 26 dollars and some cents a week. I always try to tell my son that's what I started out with. And we would make one whole family. They treated me good. The people treated me good and I didn't have no desire at all of leaving that place.

RS: So you stayed there how many years total? [00:02:00]

PM: Exactly, it was 24 years and 10 months.

RS: 24 years and 10 months, okay.

PM: They closed down. They closed down October the 9th, 1979.

RS: How long were they in business? Do you remember? Do you have any idea?

PM: How long were they in business? They started back in the '40s.

RS: Back in the '40s, okay. What did they do? Just pants?

PM: Pants. We went into pants and we tried skirts, but that didn't pan out too well, though. I think what killed us was the payroll.

RS: Payroll?

PM: Everybody made a decent living.

RS: Now how many -- you worked there for almost 25 years. How many people were working there during the period you worked there, more or less?

PM: Well when we closed down, it had about 472 people.

RS: 472? So it was a pretty big operation. Was it about [00:03:00] that size the whole time you were there?

PM: No, maybe the last eight years, they bought out what you call Strongwear Slacks. Strongwear Pants bought them out, and that's what gave us maybe 100, maybe 200 people.

RS: Were they locally owned?

PM: They were from Allentown.

RS: Now you started out as a floor boy, you said? What did you do?

PM: Carried pants there. 99 percent were females, so I carried pants to them, and I did that for 17 years.

RS: 17 years carrying, okay. What did you do after that, then?

PM: Then I went to what they call a chain presser. I was a presser for that for eight years.

RS: So you worked the final eight years as a presser. How many hours a day did you usually work in that job? [00:04:00]
Was it an eight-hour job?

PM: It was an eight-hour job, but when I was a floor boy, I worked [all kinds?] of hours. I never went home at quarter after four. Over time, we'd [go be there at four?]. And then when I got on pressing, I decided I didn't need no more late hours, and I finally went home after eight hours.

RS: So a lot of times, you worked overtime.

PM: Yes.

RS: That was by choice?

PM: By choice. And most of the time, it was five-and-a-half to eight.

RS: So you worked Saturday mornings, too, then. When did you get married?

PM: 1968.

RS: '68?. So there was a pretty, number of years there before you--

PM: Yeah.

RS: How did your pay increase over the years? What kind of increases did you have?

PM: When I first started there, if you were a good worker, the owner [00:05:00] would give you raises now and then. But most of our raises after we got so much were through the union, you know, once a year. Or once in a while, the boss, if he could, would give you five or 10 cents, plus the union wages they would give to you.

RS: You belonged to the union?

PM: Yes.

RS: What union was that?

PM: Amalgamated.

RS: Amalgamated Textile Workers Union?

PM: Yes.

RS: Did you belong to the union during that whole period of time that you were in the shop?

PM: Yes.

RS: What did you think of the union?

PM: Well, I had mixed feelings about the union. It was just some of the local ways it was run. Now the union as a whole, I didn't think much of the pension plan.

RS: Why was that?

PM: Well, I had 24 years, and when I retired I had to freeze my pension [00:06:00], and when I turned 55, I'm only going to get \$52 a month.

RS: \$52 a month after 24 years? And you can't touch it until you're 65.

PM: Until I'm 65.

MD: How much?

RS: \$52--

PM: \$52 a month.

RS: Was that generally true of everybody in the same sort of situation?

PM: I know friends of mine that retire after 30-something years and they get like \$120 a month.

RS: How come you got less?

PM: Because I had to freeze my pension.

RS: Oh, I see. In other words, they retired you -- actually, you were sort of laid off when they closed down. I see. What other benefits did they have at the--?

PM: The health benefit was good.

RS: That's Blue Cross Blue Shield?

PM: You could buy Blue Cross and Blue Shield. We had people that would buy Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and I thought it was like double-dipping because the union, you went in the hospital, they paid for everything.

RS: The union did?

PM: The union did. [00:07:00]

RS: So they had their own plan?

PM: They had their own health plan.

RS: Was everybody there a member of the Amalgamated Textile Workers?

PM: Yes. All except the foremans.

RS: Okay, the bosses weren't. And did you ever have any strikes in the period you were there?

PM: We had one wildcat strike. That was around 1973. We did that for about four or five days.

RS: What was that about?

PM: Well, our contract ran out May the 31st and they didn't want to give us any increase until September. And what they wanted to give us at that time was I think 12 cents an hour, and we wanted to have that June the 1st. So after five days out, the president of Strongwear Pants Company decided to bring us back to work and give us money, date of June the 1st. The only time I was [00:08:00] there that we ever had any type of walkout.

RS: In 24 years. That's a pretty good record.

PM: Yeah.

RS: Yeah. How about the layoffs? Did you ever experience layoffs?

PM: No, it was seasonal work. You know, a lot of time, they didn't have enough work. Maybe one or two days out of a week. But that was every year. And in the '70s, it got

really bad around 1975. It started to get bad. And four years later, we closed down.

RS: When you say it started to get bad, what do you mean? The work slowed -- the orders weren't there?

PM: The orders wasn't there and I imagine the material was being made overseas, and I think that's what hurt it the most.

RS: Where did you get your materials from, mostly? The cloth and that stuff. Was that woven in America?

PM: We were getting it from America for a while. [00:09:00] That happened around '74, '75.

RS: And then it started coming in from other places. So in other words, you really got hurt by foreign competition.

PM: Yes.

RS: Was most of the stuff from Korea?

PM: I think Taiwan and stuff like that.

RS: And that started about '74, '75. That was a pretty short time between that and the time it'd get closed down.

PM: Well, Strongwear merged with an outfit called Fairtex. They owned 51 percent, and it was too much -- I think, by merging, that hurt us, too.

RS: How do you mean?

PM: I think if they would've just stuck with Strongwear Pants, I think we might've survived maybe a couple more years.

RS: Instead of going in.

PM: Instead of going in.

RS: Did he explain at all why he did that?

PM: No.

RS: Why do you think he did it? [00:10:00]

PM: To me, I think he wanted to be the number-one pants company in the state of Pennsylvania.

RS: So he had ambitions, in other words.

PM: He was a good man. I think he bit off maybe a little bit more than he could handle.

RS: Now you said when you went there, you obviously liked the place or you wouldn't have stayed so long.

PM: When I first started there, I started in January, and I said right off the bat that I was only going to be there three months. And I ended up being there 24--

RS: Why is that? Why did you change your mind?

PM: Well, all my friends, they were getting jobs, like better jobs, working at the foundry or working at the express, and they were starting out with a little bit more than I was making. So I figured I would advance myself, but in the long run, I caught them and passed them.

RS: Why did you like the job? Why did you like working there?

[00:11:00]

PM: Well, we had, to me, we had a truly good man for a boss and couldn't find any better boss than we had there. If we needed anything, he helped us out. If we needed money, we could borrow money. He was more of a family type of boss. He always said that family comes first if we had a sickness. To me, he treated everybody the same.

RS: This was the owner?

PM: The owner.

RS: Levy.

PM: Morton Levy.

RS: Morton Levy. So in other words, he created a sort of family atmosphere.

PM: Yes, he did.

RS: Did the other workers feel this way?

PM: Yes.

RS: And you said most of them were women. 99 percent of them were women. So he had a good atmosphere.

PM: Yes, he did. He took care of all his workers very well.

RS: How did he ever take care of you over the years? Were there ever any particular incidents you remember?

[00:12:00]

PM: I remember at a Christmas party, my engine in my car went, and he told me to meet him up at Brown and Daub the next day. It would've been Saturday morning. And we went to

Brown and Daub, and he cosigned -- I was 18 or 19 years old -- and he cosigned for me to get a car at Brown and Daub.

RS: That's amazing. (laughter) That's really amazing. Did he do this for other people?

PM: Yes.

RS: What was his attitude towards the union? How did he get along with the union? If you only had one strike in 24--

PM: Nope, no problem.

RS: No problem?

PM: No problem.

RS: Was he more or less in favor of the union?

PM: His main thing was -- and he proved it to us many a time -- for us to make a living. And he disapproved of some things, but when you stop and think of the things he disapproved, he knew it could hurt us in the long run [00:13:00], union-wise. But I can't say nothing but good about the man. He treated me like a son, and he treated a lot of -- if you was a good worker, he treated you good.

RS: You said most of the people on the plant felt this way.

PM: Yes. As long as that man is on this Earth, I'm going to remember him. Because my mother passed away in 1961. And my mother was in the hospital 30 days before she died, and I was off the whole 30 days. And he told me not to worry

about anything, stay with my mother. Every week, I got a paycheck.

RS: That's amazing.

PM: Every week, I got a paycheck from him.

RS: That's a lot different from the way it is now, it seems. So you really felt good about all those years in Strongwear?

PM: I don't miss the work, but I miss the people.

RS: Why don't you miss the work? [00:14:00]

PM: Well--

RS: Describe it a little bit.

PM: It was hot in the summertime, pressing. It was real hot in the factory, and you had some people that, they get up on the wrong side of bed, especially when I was a floor boy. I had to hear their problems.

RS: They take it all out on you.

PM: But I accepted that because it was part of my job. But when I started with the city, I realized how much I missed not working outside.

RS: In other words, being closed in. When you were pressing, did you -- describe that job a little bit.

PM: Well the seams on your pants. The guy's seam is on the outside -- the long bar with the legs on it. You would press the seam. It only stands about this high. In the

summertime, the heat hit you from your knees to here. And you had to put out about [00:15:00] between 7 to 8 hundred pair of pants a day. If you did that back then in the '70s, you could make yourself \$75 to \$80 a day.

RS: That was piece work, then.

PM: Piece work. In fact, when Strongwear closed down, if they had took me off my job and put me on any other job, they would've had to pay me \$9.74 an hour. I started six months later with the city, and I started with \$5.08 an hour.

RS: So you actually came down almost 50 percent.

PM: People made a lot of money. We had people making \$30,000 a year.

RS: In the '70s?

PM: Yes.

RS: And that was a good wage.

PM: Back in the '70s, I was averaging \$22,000 myself.

RS: Which was a good wage.

MD: In the '70s?

PM: Mm-hmm.

RS: Yeah, so -- that was a good wage.

MD: I was working at the Steel, making -- the most I ever made was \$14,000 [00:16:00] a year.

PM: Like I said, Mort Levy, he never cut our prices. He always said, "If you make the money, I make the money." He never cut anybody.

MD: Is this your son?

PM: Yes, this is my younger son.

MD: How you doing?

RS: How you doing? Now you said about 1974, things started to change.

PM: Change. In fact, in '75 was the first time I ever collected unemployment.

RS: You got laid off.

PM: No, we was working like two, three days a week.

RS: Oh, I see.

PM: And I was collecting a partial. 19, 20 years I was there before I even--

RS: Collected unemployment.

PM: Collected unemployment.

RS: And you attribute that to the import of foreign--

PM: Foreign goods.

RS: How about in the factory itself? Did Levy upgrade the machinery? The machines, the sewing--

PM: He started. He started upgrading. He was starting to [00:17:00] put in one machine that would need two operations. There wasn't the idea of cutting somebody or

laying somebody off. This was more productive. If we asked him for an upgrade in any machines, he was always looking into new machines.

RS: So he did keep up with that. What did you feel--think about when this started to happen? How did you look at it down the--

PM: I'm looking at it. I'm 42 years old, and I'm wondering, "Where am I going to get a job?" And I have two sons.

RS: How old were your children at the time?

PM: They were five and my oldest was 16 or 11. 11.

RS: So they were young. So you're really starting to get worried about this. [00:18:00]

PM: Yes. I was off for six months, and what I was making on unemployment at that time, me and my wife -- and in '79 when it went down bad, because '78 was a bad year, and then '79 was really bad. Well, unemployment went totally down, to not what -- I was making -- we both were bringing home unemployment. So it hurt us about six, seven months before I got a job with the city. It took me a year to get back on my feet.

RS: Now was your wife laid off? She was there, too, you said.

PM: She got laid off. Her work cut out the 1st. 1st of October, '79. And I was let go about a week later.

RS: But she was also laid off back in the mid-'70s, too. What did the rest of the people you worked with [00:19:00]--

PM: Well they opened another plant on Northampton Street called Astro, but they only took like 90 people. And me and my wife wasn't part of the 90 people.

RS: Is that plant still there, or are they closed?

PM: No. They lasted five years and they closed completely.

RS: Were they doing the same thing that Strongwear was doing?

PM: Well, they were doing more of short pants -- tennis pants and stuff like that.

RS: Sports pants, clothes.

PM: They closed after five years, after we did.

RS: What did the other people think about the situation? In other words, did a lot of them feel the same way you did? Obviously, worried about what was going to happen.

PM: I still see a lot of them, of my coworkers. And we've always got to talk about Strongwear, you know? How Strongwear was and how we were all just one family. We helped each other out, and that was through Mort Levy. [00:20:00] I can't hear anybody talk anything bad about Strongwear.

RS: Now you said earlier, at the beginning, you said something about the payroll being too big.

PM: I think the payroll really hurt us. There were people making good money back in the '70s. And he wouldn't never cut nobody, and when it came for raise time, he never tried to cheat nobody out of it. To me, I think the payroll -- he had like, maybe close to a \$4 thousand -- I mean, excuse me, \$4 million-dollar payroll. And I think that really hurt us.

RS: So you think that maybe, had he cut back on the number of people working, he might've--

PM: We would've been open. But how long?

RS: It might have just extended a bit longer. Were most of the people who worked there long-termers like you? In other words, did they work there a fairly long period of time?

[00:21:00]

PM: I'll go high. At least 65 percent of the people had at least 25 years and over.

RS: So it was a very stable workforce. Where did these people go after they got laid off? People you know, for example.

PM: Well, they went -- some of them went to different factories. Some went to bathing-suit factories. A couple worked down where my wife worked, at Avante down here. You know, they just spread out, the ones that could work and were able to work. I guess some of them that was old enough to retire ended up retiring.

RS: Did any of them -- were any of them able to get early retirement or anything like that, do you know?

PM: No. For Amalgamated [Textile Workers Union], you had to be 65 years old.

RS: 65 to get your retirement. Did the union at all try to help out in this?

PM: No.

RS: They didn't do anything? They didn't try to locate other jobs or anything?

PM: Only for certain people. You know, we had a [00:22:00] local that had a pants factory up in Allentown, and then they had an (inaudible) up in Northampton. And I don't think a lot of people wanted to travel. They had some up around Bangor. Most of them, what I see is -- they looked around the area and went into different work and stuff like that.

RS: So the union did not actually try to find or locate jobs at other plants?

PM: Well they said they would, but to my opinion, I don't think they did the job.

RS: In other words, you didn't see them doing that much. This was a -- about the mid-1970s is about the time when American industry as a whole is starting to slide.

PM: I'd seen that happening in the '60s. In fact, in '64 when the plant closed up in Bangor. I was telling people then about trying to set some kind of [00:23:00] service payout in case it hit us, but everybody said Strongwear was going to be here for years. And I was telling people then, and then I got involved in the union and tried to tell people, "Let's put one percent or two percent of our earnings toward our pension plan, too." A lot of people in the pants factory, they couldn't see it then. They couldn't see it. But come around '78 and '79 -- when they closed down in '79 -- that phone was ringing off the hook every day. People saying, "Do we get service pay?" and I told them no. It wasn't in our contract.

RS: Now you wanted that as early as the '60s.

PM: Yes, I wanted that as early as '64 when the one up in Bangor closed down.

RS: You said you were involved -- were you involved in the union at all?

PM: Right after we had that wildcat walkout, then I got on the committee. We had like a committee. That's when I got on that. And I [00:24:00] stood on that until they closed down.

RS: What did you do on this union committee? What was your job?

PM: My job was for the people. I was always fighting the next committee person. I believe in, to this day, I believe in every member should know what's going on. And back then, they wouldn't tell the membership. I got in arguments over it. I was going to run for chairman at that time, but I could see that I could not win over the committee people. The chairlady we had, she had -- there were 11 members and she had seven of them under her arm.

RS: There was no way you could get elected.

PM: No. No way.

RS: So in a sense, you were sort of rebelling against that leadership, that union leadership. You were trying to get them to be more forthcoming.

PM: I wanted to have an [00:25:00] input, and the one that was on my side, we fought hard, very hard. And we had told the people -- whenever we went in the office to talk with Mort Levy, we came out and told the people what Mort Levy said and stuff like that. To me, I think the people had the right to know. I think that's why they didn't -- when they closed down Strongwear, I think that's why they didn't take me from Strongwear to Astro.

RS: You think it was the union, actually? It wasn't the management.

PM: It was more the union, because the same lady that was there at Strongwear ended up being up there. So in a way, I was glad they didn't take me.

RS: Okay, now in '79, when you were laid off, what was your -- do you remember how you felt at that time? Here you are, you put 25 years at a place, and now it's closed down. What were you thinking about then? [00:26:00]

PM: I wasn't hurt, because I figured, to me -- I was hurt because my wife was out of a job. You know, I'm supposed to be the breadwinner. I would find work somewhere along the line. Everything was falling into place for me. In '79, I campaigned for Phil Mitman, who became mayor in 1980 of Easton. I knew one way or another I was going to get a job with the city. And I would've had it earlier, but I said, "I worked that many years, I'm going to take six months off and collect, then I'll start with the city in April." And that's how it panned out. But if I wouldn't have had a job coming up, then I might have felt different.

RS: So you weren't completely at a loss. You figured there was something. What about your wife? What happened to her?

PM: Well, she got a job with [Joanne] Pants. [00:27:00] They closed up.

RS: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) I have the tape recorder on. So she got a job, then. How long, do you recall, was she off?

PM: She started April the 1st in 1980. Right?

ELIZABETH MARTINEZ: What?

PM: At [Joanne's?]? You started the 1st of April, 1980.

EM: Yeah. No, no, no.

PM: And I started -- no, October.

EM: No, no, no, October.

PM: October, October. I started--

EM: You started in April. I started J&A in--

PM: October.

RS: Okay. What did you do at the city?

PM: When I first got hired, I was hired on the highway as a laborer.

RS: At \$5.08 an hour.

PM: \$5.08. [00:28:00] And after 30 days, it went to \$5.29.

RS: And that was down from \$9--

PM: .74.

RS: \$9.74. (laughs) How did you feel about that?

PM: Bad.

RS: I guess.

PM: Bad. The benefits with the city is great.

RS: Okay, they have a pension plan, too, and a medical plan?

PM: They have everything you could think. Major medical, Blue Cross Blue Shield, dental, eyeglasses, prescriptions.

RS: The whole thing.

PM: We got the whole thing. That's what I was more concerned about than the rate.

RS: You were what, 40--?

PM: 42.

RS: 42 at that time. Okay, so these things were important to you. Now what do you do now at the city?

PM: I'm a truck driver.

RS: And let's see, you've been there eight years. No, 10 years.

PM: I'll start my 13th year.

RS: 13th year. And you'll be eligible then to collect a pension.

PM: When I'm 62. [00:29:00] You have to have 20 years with the city, so I started right at the right time. I can get my pension and collect my social security at the same time.

RS: How do you like working for the city?

PM: I like it.

RS: You like it. Why? What do you like about it?

PM: Because every day is a challenge. When you go in, see, I come from a pant factory where you have to work eight hours a day. I come from the pant factory to the city and I see

guys that never worked in a foundry or a pant factory, and look at them, and they're lazy. And I always say, if they had to work in a pant factory or a foundry, they'd never make it.

RS: But the job is outside, of course.

PM: Yes.

RS: How do you feel about the fact that -- for example, here on South Side -- in your lifetime, since you've been living here, most of the factories [00:30:00] have closed down.

PM: It hurts.

RS: Why?

PM: Well, you see generations. You see grandfathers work there, their sons and right down the line. It hurts.

RS: Do you have any friends or know any people--

[INTERRUPTION]

RS: He just said that he was president of AFSCME local #447.

PM: So at Council 33 in Philly. Well, then when I started going to union meetings, they had foremans, they had supervisors all in the union. And I asked that union meeting, "Why do you have foremans and supervisors?" People that can have members lose their jobs. And they said, "Well, we need them for the money." And I turned around, and [00:31:00] my father-in-law was a secretary for 23 years, and he felt the same way. It was like their own

little clique. And I didn't want to buck my father-in-law, but I went to every union meeting. And he retired. I told my wife, I said, "Dad, I'm going to run for executive board. I'm going to try to help the people." So I ran a year, year-and-a-half. I was on the executive board and I was elected board president, and I was nominated and I wasn't going to take it, but I said, "If I don't get involved, then everything I did the last year-and-a-half is no good." I got elected in '87, and every year--

RS: You're still the president ever since.

PM: But even now, I believe in honesty. When I came under, Sal Panto was mayor. [00:32:00] I didn't like the way he was running the city. I didn't like the people he brought in. And in '86, I campaigned against him. No city worker ever did.

RS: That's right. You're right about that. (laughs)

PM: And I campaigned against him and let the paper know I was campaigning against him. And I told him right to his face, "You brought the wrong people in. It ain't against you, but you're responsible for who you brought in." And right after that, people elected me for --

RS: Another term?

PM: No. First term -- I was just saying. And they thought then that I was doing it to get back at Panto. But I

wasn't doing it to get back at anybody. I was doing it to get our membership to know what a union is about. And that's how it started. Four years, five years.

RS: What kind of response have you had as --?

PM: Well, second year, nobody ran against [00:33:00] me. Third year, one guy ran against me, and he only took 33 votes out of 140-something votes. The year after that, another guy only had 17 votes. And last year, 16 votes.

RS: So you're obviously pretty popular.

PM: So I pull in about 80 percent of the votes anyway.

RS: And what's your total membership?

PM: Right now, it's 126.

RS: 126, oaky. What are the big issues between your union and the city?

PM: The main issue of mine was to upgrade the jobs, have union members sent to school with training. That was my main things. The city agreed to pay for their education to go to [00:34:00] [NAT-AT?] or community college or [trade things?]. You have to pay the first half, but then if you finish it and have to pay the whole thing, we reimburse 50 percent. That, we have going. Upgrade the workers, educate the workers, and then my main thing is that they get the right workers in the right jobs. And the city and us communicate very well on that.

RS: You think you're able to deal better with Goldsmith now?

PM: Yes. In fact, we deal a lot better with Goldsmith. I can call, or have my secretary send Goldsmith a letter or a form and ask for a meeting. In 24 hours, I got it. Right now, eight months into it -- almost eight months -- there's no problem. And now we want a negotiation. [00:35:00]

RS: That's right. The negotiations are coming up, I heard that, right. Well, the city's having some financial problems. Of course, it always is.

PM: We know that. But they're bargaining in good faith with us.

RS: So you feel relations are pretty good now at the present time.

PM: Well, it was with Panto, a lot of the time with Panto he would say "Yeah," but it took him so long to answer. But with this administration now, our goal is when something's small, let's not wait until it gets big to hit it. And we need to have been hitting things right before they get started.

RS: Across the country, in the United States as a whole, the labor movement has been taking it on the chin in the last 12 years, since the Reagan Administration. How does AFSCME, or how do you feel about that? Do you think the

labor movement is really hurting, or do you think

[00:36:00] there's room for improvement?

PM: There's room for improvement. See, when you're talking about labor movement, you have to have a two-way street. Like with us, 75 or more union members are good members. You have 25 you've got to battle all the time. So we do it here and all over the country. See, union members want to receive, but they don't want to give. And this went back for years. I don't believe in arguing back and forth. If we've got to argue, I'll walk out and come back the next day or an hour later. Because you don't solve nothing by screaming back and forth. You're supposed to be a man, I'm supposed to be a man. Let's act like the man. If you gotta have a couple guys on there gonna act like idiots, then I don't want to associate with them. And I told my committee or my executive board the same [00:37:00] thing. I train them very well. If you go into any kind of meeting, you listen. Then if you have anything you want to scream about, let's call a caucus and go in another room and discuss it. And we want the city to do the same thing.

RS: So you don't believe in the confrontation kind of approach.

PM: You don't gain by it.

RS: AFSCME, now, is one of the biggest unions in the country in total membership.

PM: They have about 600,000.

RS: 600,000, yeah. A good friend of mine's a vice president in New York City on the council there. The Social Service Workers Union. I don't know what the number is.

PM: I know what the local is. I have it here.

RS: Obviously, you hope that if Democrats get elected, the atmosphere will improve for labor. [00:38:00]

PM: I hope so. I hope so. I watched the whole Democratic Convention last week. If he does one-third of what he's talking about, it's an improvement.

RS: That's true (laughs). That's true. How do you see the future of Easton? What's your perspective on it? Everybody keeps talking about the future of a city like Easton.

PM: Well you're never going to bring it back because Easton can't grow. People in Easton got to realize it can't grow. You go to the north, you've got Forks Township. You've got Wilson, you've got (inaudible) Township, and you got (inaudible). You can't expand Easton.

RS: Plus, all the industries have closed down.

PM: People have to understand, it ain't like Palmer Township, they can expand north. Easton cannot expand. I mean, they can hope to bring somebody in town, to take over some of

these stores that are unoccupied. But people talk expanding. [00:39:00] It ain't going to expand.

RS: Yeah, that's not going to happen.

PM: And I think if we give Goldsmith two terms, I think he can bring something back into Easton.

RS: So you see there's some sort of possibility then, for Easton.

PM: We approved, I read in the paper today, the budget. It's in the best shape it's been in 12 years, and that man came in with a million-and-a-half deficit. Cut down on all that spending is what you have to do. Everybody -- it ain't only the city. Like I tell my membership, over time, we've got to help, too.

RS: Have you lost any people? Any layoffs?

PM: A year ago, they laid off 13 people and hired between 13 and 15. But we had maybe 14 or 15 people eligible for retirement, and we went into the administration and told them to give these people an incentive. Maybe they'll retire, and they [00:40:00] did. They gave them the full coverage for two years. That's a total of about \$8,400.

RS: So nobody's really lost, then, too much.

PM: Well we did lose 13 people. But we didn't lose any from layoffs.

RS: Martin, do you have any questions?

MD: Oh, I thought you were going to (inaudible)

RS: Okay, okay.

MD: Oh! Did you Al [Maneary?] You don't have to tape that. Al
[Maneary?] at Strongwear Pants?

PM: Yes.

MD: You did! That's my uncle.

PM: Is it?

MD: He died in '78.

PM: Seventy-eight or '77?

MD: Around, one of those years.

PM: You look like him.

MD: I do.

PM: He was stocky, wasn't he?

MD: He was. He was from Brazil. He was Brazilian. Al
Maneary. I didn't know exactly where he worked, but I knew
he worked in a pants factory and he was a presser. I knew
that much. He used to live at 11th and Butler. [00:41:00]
Al Maneary. You're the first guy that knew him.

PM: Well, at the pants factory, they come and go. You know,
especially young kids. They came and go. Only the older
ones stuck around for a while. Or you had Northampton
Pants. You had Easton Trousers. You had Strongwear. You
had Strongwear Pants, you had Strongwear Slacks, you had
Mr. Pants. So you had quite a few--

RS: Just in Easton.

PM: Just in Easton.

RS: That's amazing. That was at least 1,000 or more workers right here.

MD: All right, we're ready for the young blood now. What I wanted to do is I want you to get up, stretch your legs a little bit.

END OF AUDIO FILE