

THE HOBOKEN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEWEE: PATSY LOUIS FREDA

INTERVIEWER: HOLLY METZ
with Robert Foster

LOCATION: 11 WILLOW TERRACE, HOBOKEN, NJ

DATE: 3 FEBRUARY 2012

TRACK #1

HM: Would you identify yourself, and tell me
your date and place of birth, please?

PF: My name is Patsy Louis Freda. Today is
the third of February 2012.

HM: And when were you born?

PJ: 7/13/29.

HM: And were you born in Hoboken?

PJ: I was born in Hoboken, down on Madison
Street.

HM: So you were born at home.

PF: Yes. I'm pretty sure. But I don't remember.

HM: So you've been told. And where were you in the order of childbirth? Were you the eldest?

PF: My mother was married twice. Her first husband got killed [on the railroad.] She had two [boys] and two [girls.] She married my father and had a son and three daughters. Of the eight that there were, there's just me and my two sisters. Everybody else has passed.

HM: May I ask -- the first husband was killed in the war?

PF: No. He was run over by a train. He worked for the railroad. From what I understand, as it's told, there was a curve, and he tried to jump off the train. He fell under the train, and got cut by the wheels.

HM: And during that time, work life was a lot more dangerous.

PF: My father worked for New York Central, too, until he retired.

HM: So both of her husbands were railroad guys.

PF: Right.

HM: And why was that? Just a fluke?

PF: I have no idea.

HM: Okay. So tell me a little bit about both your mother and your father.

PF: My father came from a town outside of Naples called San Nigol [Santa Nicola?], and he met my mother up in Port Jervis [New York] after her husband died. They two got together.

HM: So she wasn't originally from Hoboken?
Why was she in Port Jervis?

PF: If my memory is correct, I think she
came from Italy, along with one sister [Mary.]
[Interruption]

HM: You said you thought your mom came from
Italy, but you weren't sure.

PF: [She did.]

HM: I can look up some of this for you. Tell
me your mother's first name and her maiden name.

PF: Her first name was Rose. Her maiden name
was Silvio.

HM: What year was she born?

PF: [1899.] She died in 1941.

HM: That helps. We can do it in reverse. And
she died in Hoboken?

PF: Yes. In the hospital. Yes.

HM: Okay. I can go backwards. Her maiden name?

PF: My grandmother's maiden name was a long Italian name, I remember. [Angela Guliotta, born August 1, 1874]

HM: And your dad's name?

PF: John M. Freda.

HM: And you told me where he was born.

PF: He came from a town outside of Naples called San Nicola [Avellino, Naples.]

HM: I will check that out.

So you're born in Hoboken in 1929, which was right before the big crash. You said your dad was a railroad guy.

PF: He was a track man on the railroad.

HM: He had a job during the Depression.

PF: He worked the rails. He kept the rails connected. Him and three other guys.

HM: Was that unusual, that he had such a stable position during that time?

PF: I don't know.

HM: You were too young.

PF: It was a tough job.

HM: Where did you live in Hoboken?

PF: Originally -- I was born at 308 Madison Street. Then my grandmother bought 302 Madison Street, and that's where we grew up. It's now a park. They tore down 300, 302, and 304.

HM: I know exactly where that is. And what was the neighborhood like? What do you remember?

PF: You could sit outside anytime, man or woman, and nobody would bother you.

HM: And their thing was what?

PF: They didn't touch anybody in the neighborhood.

There was a garage around the corner -- no openings. All four sides were closed in. Double wall. You got into the place from underneath.

HM: Interesting. Do you know anyone who ever went in there, who described it to you? [*PF shakes his head no.*] Okay. Maybe they went in and they didn't come out.

PF: Because my grandmother's house was here, and this place was here. You could look at it. There were no openings. Not even a skylight.

HM: And do you think the city administration -- that people were aware of them.

PF: We all knew.

HM: And were they connected to them? You don't know.

PF: You don't ask questions.

HM: I'm just curious how much was known, and how much was discussed.

PF: Two different groups. And we also had two butcher shops, one at each end of the street.

HM: And was there a connection, or it just happened to be that way?

PF: It just happened.

HM: Was the neighborhood mostly Italian families?

PF: Yes. Italian, and Yugoslav. On the next block -- the whole block was all Yugoslav. On our side it was mostly Italians. We had [unclear] and next door to it was an "ice" [unclear]. You poured coal, kerosene, everything. I remember when kerosene was short; I stood for

an hour with a tank that came up with two five-gallon cans of kerosene. It was so bad that when I put the kerosene out, my dad had to pry my fingers from the cans. I shoved them under the cold water. I thought the water was hot, until my fingers started to move.

HM: Coal wasn't delivered?

PF: Coal was delivered, yes, but we had a kerosene stove. The same guy that delivered coal delivered ice. We had an icebox. We didn't have a refrigerator.

HM: And just talking about the Depression times -- were a lot of your neighbors on relief?

PF: Probably. Yes.

HM: Did people hide it?

PF: No.

HM: It would be hard to hide, because if you're having trouble --

PF: My mother went down many times to the city to get us shoes.

HM: They had clothing distribution for children, also.

PF: The guy who was on -- they called him the poormaster. If you got shoes that were two sizes too big, you'd grow into them. By the time they fit you, they were worn out.

HM: So was Hoboken very badly affected by the Depression? Did a lot of people lose their jobs?

PF: Yes.

HM: And when did the recovery start to come?

PF: Probably the '40s.

HM: Because of the war?

PF: I used to work. I used to get any job I could find.

HM: When did you first start working?

PF: When I was twelve years old.

HM: And what was your first job?

PF: Delivering newspapers, working for a peddler.

HM: What newspaper was it? Do you remember which one?

PF: You used to get money -- you'd go down by the ferry, and the *New York News* would roll up, and you would buy as many papers as you had money for, and go down to the "settlements." That's how I made money.

HM: Did they give you some kind of --

PF: No.

HM: You just carried them. Wow.

PF: I worked for a peddler, selling
vegetables, fruits. I worked for a butcher. I shined shoes.

RF: Did the peddler have a truck, or --

PF: Horse and wagon.

RF: I did a lot. I shined shoes.

HM: And you would shine shoes at --

PF: Anyplace. Every place. I carried the box
with me.

HM: Would you go to bars and shine shoes?

PF: Yes.

HM: And they let kids in, right?

PF: At that time, bars used to sell food.

HM: Right. That was the free-lunch idea -- no such thing as a free lunch. We have all these bars now. What were bars like then? It was a different kind of place.

PF: It was family oriented.

HM: Oh, really. So women went to the bars?

PF: Women went into the bars, but they went in through the back.

HM: So they had a separate entrance?

PF: Well, yes and no. Some bars you went through the front, some you went through the back. Like this bar around the corner -- you went into the hallway, into the back of the bar.

HM: And the women hung out in one --

PF: They didn't stay that long. They'd make you uncomfortable.

HM: And what happened in the bars besides drinking? Did people -- ?

PF: You'd play pool, or play cards.

HM: Bartenders -- did they loan people money?

PF: That I don't know. My wife, at that time, who I was going with, was annoyed because I would kiss her goodnight, and I'd go into the bar. If she heard about that, she'd get mad. I'd keep her happy. That's her picture.

HM: We'll get to her, and you'll tell us -- we'll get to that in a minute, as you grow up.

Tell me a little bit about what school was like in Hoboken.

PF: I know I had a schoolteacher at Number #1 School [now Connors], and the principal didn't get along -- I used to get bad marks. I wasn't a good student. They didn't pay attention to you.

HM: Did all the kids know that -- that nothing was expected of them?

PF: Some kids got along. I never got along with the schools. In fact, I met one of the schoolteachers later on in life, and she said to me, "I suppose you're a truck driver or a mechanic. That's the only job you could get."

HM: A trucker driver or a mechanic. Wow.

PF: I said, "I'll bet I'm making four times what you make."

HM: And that's probably true, too.

PF: But those were schoolteachers -- Miss Gonzales. She was fantastic. She was tough. But she was a good teacher.

HM: In a fairer way.

PF: And Miss Faulkner was another one. Miss Faulkner -- she had to be 6'1", 6'2". I saw her years and

years later. She lived at one of the two towers on Hudson Street. I'm coming up River Street with the ambulance, and I knew her right away. Of course, my middle name was Louis, and she said, "How are you, Louis? Are you married?" When she died, I wanted to go to her wake, but they said, "closed casket."

HM: By the family's choice.

PF: She was a good teacher.

HM: It's good to remember the good ones.

PF: There were a couple of them.

RF: And this is what -- at Connors School?

PF: Yes. Connors.

HM: I had heard stories that the Italian kids and the Irish kids were --

PF: -- "incompatible."

HM: Yes. So tell me more about that. Because people can't imagine --

PF: You couldn't get past Willow Avenue. You had to stay west of Willow Avenue. The Irish kids on the east of Willow Avenue.

HM: And what would happen? Gangs would beat you up?

PF: They'd have fights. After a while, you got along. You had to get along.

HM: Where does that animosity come from?

PF: The parents. My own parents. The Irish.

HM: But probably from experience, too,

PF: When we were getting married, my father was the only one I thought I'd have problems with. Because my wife came in after the family -- as the only Irish one in the family. So I said to her -- we had to go visit her parents. She lived down at No. 1 [Willow Terrace.] I said,

"If my father throws a cold towel on us, expect it. You're an Irishman." So we went in, and it turned out my father seeing her father -- they were drinking buddies. "Hey, John!" "Hey, Mac." That's over.

HM: Very good. Just by chance, you don't know which saloon they drank together in do you?

PF: The bar on Adams Street, and Second and Grand. I don't remember the name.

HM: It's okay. I'm just curious where there meeting ground was.

RF: Like Leo's?

PF: Leo's Grandevous. Leo was a friend of his.

HM: Oh, really? Wow. So you were growing up at 302 Madison. Did you play street games, like the kids play outside?

PF: Kickball. Yeah. You would toss pennies, or caps. You would find rubber bands on the street, get a piece of cardboard, and keep wrapping rubber bands, and you have a ball. But you've got to watch that thing. You get hit with that, and you get hurt.

HM: So kids invented their own [games]--

PF: Already. Because you had no money.

HM: And did you literally play in the street, or were there empty lots?

PF: You played in the street. And you went to the Rivoli Theater. It was right next to the Washington Savings Bank. That's a parking lot now. You went there because they had a double feature, and cartoons.

HM: Do you remember anything, specifically, that you saw there, that made an impression?

PF: No. They used to sell hot dogs -- everything. They'd go up and down the aisle. Then you had

the Fabian, the U.S., the Rialto. We had a couple of them.
The Rialto was an Italian theatre.

HM: Italian why? Meaning that -- ?

PF: They would hold Italian plays.

HM: You mean they had stage performances?

PF: At the Fabian you would have a stage
performance every so often, and after a while they would
have bingo.

HM: Just to get back to the Italian plays --
who put those on?

PF: I have no idea.

HM: But do you know whether it was local
people, from in town?

PF: I have no idea.

HM: I never -- did you ever hear that?

RF: Opera.

HM: Cool. So did your parents have any free time to do anything besides work, and take care of you kids?

PF: On Sunday. They would say: go to the theatre. Go to the movies. Get lost.

RF: Go play in traffic.

PF: I used to tell my kids, "Take a hike. Go."

HM: I have to have my own life.

When did you leave school?

PF: In 1945. My sister, who was a little younger than me -- her and my father never got along, and every time he got a head of steam, he would swing and I'd get hit.

HM: But he was trying to hit her?

PF: She would drive you nuts.

HM: I know, but still --

PF: I said, "Every time he gets mad at you I'm the one that gets it." "You're supposed to get it. You're my older brother." What happened was, I joined the Army. I said, "Let me get out of the house before I get killed." I went to the post office [on River Street], upstairs. There was a recruiting office up there, and I joined.

HM: How old were you then?

PF: Seventeen. I joined --

HM: You joined the Army.

PF: I went from Whitehall Street, right to Fort Dix. I didn't even go home. I went right to Fort Dix.

HM: Seventeen. So what was that like -- the Army?

PF: I was used to being "out," because I would go with the Boy Scouts, go to a camp up there at [unclear], Camp Todd. So I was used to being away, so it didn't bother me. So I went from the post office [in Hoboken], at 39 White Hall Street, right to Fort Dix.

HM: Then what did you do, after Fort Dix?

PF: We took training, and I wound up getting sick. I had to take the training all over again. I never took a leave. I just kept in on a weekend, so I got out of the Army forty-five days ahead of time.

HM: Then what happened?

PF: Then I found a job, and then I met --

HM: -- your sweetie.

PF: -- my sweetie. At first, she didn't like me.

HM: Now where did you meet?

PF: Do you remember the Blue Point?

HM: I remember hearing about it.

PF: Well, the Blue Point was at Eighth and Willow, and in front of the Blue Point you had a bar-restaurant, and in the back you had this huge room where the kids showed up for pizza, clams, mussels, and everything else, and that's where we were heading. I parked the car on Eighth and Park, and I heard something hit the street. What it was, was my wife was in her wheelchair, and two girls were pushing her around. They weren't careful. They were banging "on this curb, off this curb," and I remember yelling at them, and saying something to the effect, "Hey, lady, do you need a chauffeur?" I don't remember what she answered.

Anyway, we went into the Blue Point, into the front end, and there she was, sitting in the booth. I slid into the seat in front of her in the booth, and she politely told me she was with her girlfriends. I took one look at that face and those blue eyes, and I was hooked. But it took me six months to get a date with her.

HM: Because?

PF: I found out later on, the fact that she was handicapped was a big reason. And the fact that the guy she went to school with, that she dated, thought they would marry, but he was more interested in becoming a priest. That kind of put the kibosh on it. So I got friendly with her mother. I got friendly with the two girlfriends who were with her that night. I explained my position, and I said to her mother -- when I wasn't at work, I'd pay the mother a visit. I said, "Every time I call your daughter, she's never here. Do you know what's wrong? I know what's wrong with your daughter."

HM: And what was wrong?

PF: Polio. I said, "It doesn't bother me." I fell in love with the person. " But how can I go out with her if she's never here?" "You call. She'll be here." I did, and in that phone call, she says, "I don't want to talk to him." I hear her in the background. The kind of men who wanted to marry her -- she was right. So after a while we got together.

HM: You won her over.

PF: Oh, yes. Persistence.

HM: Very good.

PF: We've been together ever since. I did walk away one time, and I was stupid. I said, "What the hell did I do?" I said, "I've got to find some way to get back there," and it took a hurricane. The city was blacked out. The only light was the moon in the sky.

HM: Wow. You walked through the hurricane.

PF: I did, in the '40s. I walked from my house to her -- to that corner house down there. By the time I got there I was soaking wet. Before I go any further -- my wife was the only person I know who could give an ice cube a cold. I knocked on the side door, and she says to me, "What do you want?" Oooh!

HM: Well, you must have done something if she was going to --

PF: I explained my situation. I said, "I am not leaving here until you forgive me. I apologize, and I'm not leaving." I said to her -- she was like a wall.

HM: She was stubborn; so were you.

PF: So she forgave me.

HM: Very good. And the rest is history, as they say.

PF: I never did it again. As God is my judge, I don't know why I did it. I should never have left that spot.

HM: Very good. So you said you left the Army and you got a job --

PF: I worked on the piers.

HM: Okay. We need to talk about that.

PF: I worked for Continental Baking.

HM: Before we get to Continental Baking, you have to tell me -- because that whole situation of being on the piers is really interesting.

PF: You worked in spots. There was a city -- you had to be in a city gang. That was an extra. I didn't get along with the stevedore. I'm thinking to myself, "If I'm going to get married, I can't handle this job."

HM: Because it was so occasional?

PF: Kind of. So I got a job driving a truck.

HM: Before you tell me -- I just want to ask you a little bit more about it. You're saying that there were -- just because this world doesn't exist anymore, I have to ask you -- there were these gangs? So there were people who were hired all the time?

PF: Yes.

HM: And why were they hired all the time?

PF: Because -- like Bob would have his own group. And when they called Bob, his group would go with him. They had six or seven gangs. My uncle had one.

HM: Did they pay into it?

PF: As far as I know, no. I didn't see anybody getting paid -- although when you see *On the Waterfront* --

HM: But you didn't see that.

PF: In fact, *On the Waterfront* -- I'm in that movie.

HM: I know. We need to talk about that later. We'll get to that. So you didn't see that happening. Which line did you work?

PF: For Holland.

HM: Just for Holland.

PF: The long dock -- Eighth Street. The long dock is the only one that goes along the waterfront this way, sticking out into the water.

Then I worked Pier #1 or #2. I said, "I can't take this."

HM: And what did you do?

PF: I worked on the dock. I drove a forklift. I drove a crane.

HM: And were you hauling -- emptying out ships and -- did people take home presents for themselves? Was there swag?

PF: They probably did.

HM: But you didn't see it.

PF: I never pointed -- I saw these guys growing up. "Don't let anybody put a finger at you. Don't touch anything that doesn't belong to you."

HM: So you switched to driving the truck.
Who did you drive a truck for?

PF: I worked for Automotive [Car Carrier] up here on top of Gorge Road. I got a job driving, hauling cars. I went from automotive to anchor. From anchor I went to - [Denver-Chicago]. Hauling freight. A friend of mine got me the job, and that's why I stayed.

HM: And were they unionized?

PF: Oh, yes.

HM: So that was a great thing, to have a union job. And the union was already established when --

PF: I was a teamster.

HM: Tell me a little bit about that. That was when? What time period are you talking about? The '50s, the '60s?

PF: The '50s.

HM: So that was a nice-paying job, nice and secure?

PF: I was at the bottom of the list, and I worked my way up.

HM: What does it mean to be at the bottom of the list? Meaning that you -- ?

PF: You worked sometimes, you didn't work. As each guy retired, you'd start moving up the list, or they expanded the list. [DC International was the company I worked for.]

HM: Did the drivers socialize? Did you make friends?

PF: You got friendly with the guys you were working with. You were in the same category.

HM: And did the families socialize, too?

PF: We used to have Christmas parties, or barbecues in the summertime. They would find someplace. You'd get eighty or ninety guys going.

HM: That's some party.

RF: [You were hauling freight?] Where would you pick it up? Would you go down to the waterfront?

PF: Where the bus barn is at, on the curve, on Route #3. The barn used to be there. There were eighty-nine doors.

RF: Then how far would you have -- would your route go?

PF: They used to send me into New York, New York City. I saw downtown. Eventually I would work my way up. I wound up going up to Riverdale. You have your own route that you do. You know your customers. They knew you. And from 260th Street, coming this way toward the bridge, and I'd cover all across the bridge at night.

HM: And at this time -- when did you move into the Terrace?

PF: We bought this house -- the house became available about 1949. You needed \$1,500 as a down payment, and that was like asking for \$15 million. My mother-in-law's friend was from the Bronx. She said, "What do you need it for?" We told her, and she said, "I'll give you \$1,500." So my wife -- big shot -- says, "We'll pay you back in a year." And we did. I got hurt on the docks and I got a settlement. The check I got was for \$1,500. I paid the lawyer off, so we were all over in the Bronx. He gave the check.

HM: So your wife wasn't wrong.

PF: She was a good money manager.

RF: Did Edna live in the Terrace --?

PF: When I met her, yes.

RF: -- in that number?

PF: Number one. That's where I met her.

RF: That's right. You said number one.

HM: So in 1949 you get this house --

PF: -- and the people who bought the house when we lived here -- anyway, they stayed here until they had their own house built in Englewood Cliffs.

HM: Oh, really. Interesting.

PF: When they moved out, then it was time to clean up, paint up. That wallpaper there and on the ceiling -- ten layers. Because you see a crack in it, you reach and you pull it, and whoosh! Ten layers. But Siperstein's, in Jersey City, had a machine. We got a machine but it's not working. You take it with you and get it fixed. Use it. So I took it, and I fixed it. I took everything apart. I got all the walls done; I got everything clean in that room in there, where that bed is. I'd just cleaned it, the last bit of wallpaper off, and the whole wall caved in.

HM: So the wallpaper was holding the wall up.

PF: Then I got my family in there -- because we were getting married. I had to paint in every room. Everybody was painting.

HM: So it was sort of like Tom Sawyer. You got everybody to do your paint job for you. Nice.

PF: And the kid next door. One is dead now. They were like this. They had their hands on it. My sister had just got done cleaning. [Unclear] But anyway, we got everything done, and when we moved in it looked like a doctor's office. We had a card table and two chairs; we had a stove. We had no refrigerator. We had jelly glasses, jelly jars as glasses.

HM: A real starter-home.

PF: And you bought just enough food for dinner.

HM: Because you didn't have --

PF: You couldn't keep it.

HM: Yes. When did you get an icebox?

PF: Around November, December. We went up to Rex on the boulevard, and we bought a refrigerator there.

HM: Did you have to do it on time?

PF: My wife, one time, went up to Bergenline on a drive. She went up to Bergenline Avenue, and there was a dress -- I think it was "Sally's." At that time you could park. So she parked right outside the door, walked in, and she didn't have any money. She looked at a couple of dresses. She told me later, she said: leave these dresses aside, and I'll come back up and pay for them. He wrapped the dresses up and said, "Take them with you." And she did. Every time she needed a dress, she went right up there.

HM: Smart guy.

PF: He was good. He was like me. You don't owe people money.

HM: Yes. But he got a loyal customer, too.
By doing that. So why did she go to Bergenline? Was it just
that she preferred those -- she didn't shop in Hoboken?
Because Hoboken had much --

PF: See, my wife, after work, at night, to
clear her head, used to take a drive. So she happened to be
going down Bergenline Avenue, spotted this place. From that
time on --

HM: So the house was heated how?

PF: This house? The furnace is in there. Hot
water heater. When we got this place -- this front room is
run by gas. The house was heated by coal.

HM: That's what I'm asking.

PF: Underneath the house, where the lamp is,
there's a coal bin. You had to light a fire. I lived down
on Madison Street. She called me, she said that night it
was supposed to drop into freezing. So I had to come back
here and light a fire and bank it for the night. I walked

inside, I looked in the kitchen, and the whole kitchen was full of smoke. Because the inside of the furnace had collapsed. All the installation between the plate had collapsed.

HM: Not in this house. Are you talking about No. 1?

PF: No, here. So I shut the fire down and drained everything. I drained all the pipes to make sure it wouldn't freeze. My grandmother had used a plumber down on Madison Street and Newark -- Frey -- he knew me. I explained the situation to him. We had no money. He said, "Don't worry about it." So he took the furnace out, put a gas furnace in. The only thing is, the guy who did it, he had to put an inch hole -- he would put a three-inch hole, and the rats were running in and out. Anyway --

HM: But they put it in without getting paid for it. Of course, you paid him eventually, but he did it without up-front money. That must have been common, though. People were just kind of getting along from day to day.

PF: Well, my aunt's and grandmother's reputation. Then you build your own reputation. I always said, "Don't let anybody point a finger at you." They never did it with me, they never did it with my son. If I got a bill, I paid it.

That's another thing -- I used to work with a butcher, in my house on Madison Street. I learned a lot from him -- how to handle meat, cut meat, skin a calf. I used to skin a calf in twelve minutes.

HM: And the butcher -- that's separate from the guy who does the chickens, right? They wouldn't do the same things. I know there used to be a lot of chicken places in Hoboken?

PF: It was in the next block.

HM: The next block was the chicken places.

PF: In my house -- you walked in the front door, the butcher shop was on your right-hand side, and the vegetable store on the left-hand side. Bobby -- in fact, they got 7th and Willow Avenue."

HM: Oh, the peddler?

PF: The peddler. It was his father and uncle. Everything was in Hoboken. You didn't have to leave Hoboken at that time. Because we had a furniture store, a butcher shop, a vegetable shop, a butcher shop, a shoemaker, a barbershop, the ice truck. You had another butcher at the other end of the street.

HM: And the thing is, too, they were all your neighbors, so they knew who was good at paying their bills and who wasn't.

PF: And we had a grocery store across the street, an Italian. We had another grocery store run by Yugoslavs. Corbisero's has a bakery down in the basement, and I worked for him.

HM: The baker?

PF: Yeah. The old man, not the son. The old man.

HM: And what did you do?

PF: Go-fer. I also worked for Carlos Bakery.

HM: The real Carlos Bakery. The original.
And the same thing, you did for them?

PF: Same thing. You washed pans, you set them up for the next baker. There would be a wedding coming up, and they'd make these cakes. He'd show you how to make a tray.

RF: That was Mr. "Gustafaro?"

PF: Carlos, himself.

RF: Right. But his last name?

PF: I have no idea.

HM: This is in your teenage years? This is before you go to the Army, right? You left early, like you said --

PF: My mother died when I was ten years old.
She had a hard life.

HM: She died when you were ten. So there are
all these kids.

PF: Eight kids.

HM: She didn't die in childbirth, did she?

PF: No. With the first husband she had two
[boys] and two [girls.] With the second husband she had one
male and three females. It's too bad that she never lived
long enough to see any of her children get married, and her
grandchildren.

HM: Oh, yes. But also, to think of your
father trying to take care of all these kids, on his own.
That's hard.

PF: We did good.
I had two sisters that are left now, who are like night and
day.

HM: Meaning -- ?

PF: Easy-going, as compared to the other one. The other one died. I had two sisters die within a month of one another -- one from the first husband and one from the second husband.

HM: That's sad.

PF: But we all got along pretty good. The family stuck together. In a tenement, we each had our own job.

HM: Meaning?

PF: Well, in the wintertime, pipes would freeze and we'd get called out of bed in 1:00 in the morning, given a blow torch, get underneath the house, and free up the pipes.

HM: Now that's because your grandmother bought the house -- so it was yours. So you were like the supers.

PF: We were the go-fers. My aunt was the super. You did what she told you to do, when she told you to do it.

HM: So how many people are underneath, doing with the blowtorch? Just one person, and someone else is doing something else?

PF: Me, Joe and Russ. Three of us. You had to be careful. You had to keep moving. And you "couldn't get water," so you'd get the beams on fire, to get the water to run again.

HM: That's kind of scary.

PF: Uh huh. Well, we lived in a coldwater flat.

HM: I never lived where I had to heat something so carefully that it wouldn't catch on fire.

PF: You'd freeze your tootsies off. You'd get out of bed in the morning, and you'd run like a rabbit to the kitchen stove, to keep warm.

HM: I lived in England a long time ago, and I lived in a coldwater flat. It was amazing how cold it got.

PF: We were on the top floor, four flights up.

HM: Waiting for that hot water to come up?

PF: The only thing good about that was that in the summertime you would get the first breeze.

HM: Just out of curiosity -- did the family take pictures on the roof? Often, when Bob shows me photographs --

PF: I've got one picture of me as a teenager, on the roof.

HM: That was an open spot, for people to take pictures?

PF: Actually, you should never walk on a roof, especially women with high heels. You'll punch holes in it. Many times I went out there with a bucket of tar --

HM: -- to fix it.

PF: -- to tar the roof.

HM: So tell me a little bit more about your courtship with your wife.

PF: When we started going out together, I found out that when you're going with somebody [in a wheelchair], you become her legs. I'd walk you up to the theatre. I'd bring her up, drop her off, park the car, and then go back up and pick her up again. She couldn't do it.

Track #2

PF: I would be her legs. When we went out, it was the same thing.

HM: In some ways, you probably spent more time together, as a couple, as a result.

PF: [She almost got me killed one night.

There used to be a chicken restaurant -- I don't know if it's up there. Holly's -- you see a chicken running into a basket.

RF: That's up Route #3, right?

PF: Route #4. We used to go every Saturday.

We went up this one time, and she didn't want to eat. Doesn't order anything. Me, dopey, I ordered something. I remember one thing. We weren't married. "What are you gonna feed me? " People are giving me "horns." And the car was at the other end of the parking lot. I was expected to get it. I never did that again. The next time we went to Holly's, she didn't eat, I didn't eat.

RF: And her polio -- was that something that was developed at a really early age?

PF: At the age of eleven months. She got that polio, and one of her brothers got polio. But her brother pulled out of it; she didn't. There was that Sister Kenny -- do you remember her? Sister Kenny, in Australia -- they didn't know how to treat anybody with polio because

the muscles would tighten up. Her mother would wrap her in hot blankets, to keep her limber. My wife had polio in different quadrants of her body, like her left leg. The only thing she could move on her left leg was the toes down. She couldn't pick up, because her leg was dead. Her right leg -- they took the shinbone out and put it in both ankles, because she had "dropsies." So they fused the feet. When she drove a car, she drove it by hip. She pushed the gas pedal from her hip. This arm she could pick up to here, but she couldn't raise it. The other was opposite. So I learned all these things that I could help her with.

HM: And she was strong-willed, which is good. This happened to her, and she didn't shrink from the world.

PF: My mother-in-law said, "Do not do for my daughter. Let my daughter do for herself. Do not help her." I went along with that. It scared the hell out of me. I came in one night and the wheel chair was sitting there in the middle of the doorway there, and nobody in it. She was on the floor.

HM: Did she try to get up or something?

PF: She's on the floor. She has two buckets of water. One bucket of water, one bucket of soap. "Are you out of your mind? How do you expect to get back up in your chair?" "You're going to pick --" "Oh, no. You're going to stay there." She wouldn't get up. But you expected that from her.

RF: So she had a wheelchair from --

PF: The old wheelchair she had -- she had an old wicker. It had big wheels on it. She had the veterans' wheelchair. I got her another. I had to get rid of that thing, because the wheels in the front were small, and you could hit a crack and go flying out of it.

HM: Dangerous.

RF: But she couldn't use crutches.

PF: Yes. I could hear her coming. I knew her footsteps. You could hear her coming. When I was in the hospital, I could hear her coming. I'd say, "Here comes my wife."

HM: You didn't talk about -- you said being at the hospital -- you worked at the hospital? Oh. I thought you were talking about as a job.

PF: No. I went into the hospital -- she would come to visit.

HM: This was before --

PF: We were married. We were married a short while.

HM: You mentioned that before, and I was thinking that maybe you had worked there.

RF: I know you're very involved with the ambulance corps. Was there a connection with Edna, with that?

PF: No. My son, Bill, got involved with the ambulance corps. He must have talked to his mother about, "Let's get your father involved in it." So they got me involved in it. I took a test. I passed, and I had to go to

83rd Street and Tonnelle Avenue, to school, for four months of training.

RF: How long have you been doing that?

PF: I'm still with them. What I used to do, before I quit driving -- I used to raise money.

RF: But when did you start? In the '70s or '80s?

PF: That's a good question.

RF: It started in the '70s, right?

PF: I was in the second group to come in. I used to work Fridays, midnight to 8:00 in the morning.

HM: Tell me a little bit about what changes you've noticed in the Terrace, over time.

PF: This Terrace -- we've got a lot of nice people in there. Here, we meet everyone, I introduce myself, and we get along good. We have barbecues once or

twice a year. We help one another out. I tell them -- I've got a car out there, in the middle of two spots, and you can't park. I got a spot in front; call me, and I'll move it. And that's exactly what I do. We get along pretty good. We have nice people there. The only thing that bothers me is, you get people coming in with dogs.

HM: Who don't clean up after them. Is that you're implying?

PF: You can't catch them.

HM: That, to me, is outrageous. Don't have a dog if you can't do that.

PF: One can train a dog, believe me. We trained ours. It got so we'd say to the dog, "You need a bath, into the bathtub."

HM: And it would go?

PF: He'd get into the bathtub. That dog would jump into the bathtub.

[Interruption] The kids are all good. They always stuck close to home, and did what they were told to do. She would help them with their homework; I would go to the PTA meetings.

HM: You just rolled your eyes, and raised your eyebrows.

PF: Originally, we belonged to OLG [Our Lady of Grace]. At that time, St. Ann's School was a better school than OLG, so we went down to St. Ann's, to see the pastor. We had to make a donation. The donation was made -- agreed upon -- and then he said, "When it comes time for the PTA meetings --" He didn't expect my wife to show up, he expected me to show up. I explained the hours I was working; that there was a possibility that I wouldn't be able to have supper before I got to him. And he said, "You can miss a couple of meals." At which point, she stood up, poked him in the stomach, and said, "You oughta miss a couple of meals." [Laughter] "Well, you work it out between you. I expect him to show." I said, "Do you realize he could've thrown us out of there." The next time she saw him, she locked horns with him again.

HM: But nothing happened.

PF: No wonder you're Irish. You keep fighting with them.

[Interruption]

HM: So Catholic school was considered a better education for the kids?

PF: The kids got a good education. The only problem is that the kids wore uniforms, and you had to go to Geismar's. So they'd get gabardine pants. Gabardine was expensive. You got work clothes. Same thing? How the heck can these guys go to school neatly dressed in the morning, and come back three hours later and look like they work in a coal mine?

HM: Because they were roughhousing outside.

PF: There's a school in Harlem, on 126th, they get identical uniforms. The kids would usually come back from lunch and they were neatly dressed. I'd look at my son, and "God, almighty."

HM: Boys will be boys.

Was that common? The Catholic schools were really busy. Yes. So you're talking --

PF: You had all the nuns then.

HM: That was what time period? Fifties? Sixties?

PF: Bill was born in 1959; Scott was born in '66. By the time Scott was born, Billy was either in kindergarten or grade school. But Scott's the one that got the good grades. Billy -- he had his own problems. Now he's got two of his own.

HM: That's how he learned what you were trying to do.

PF: One of his kids wants to be a teacher. He's going to college now. The other one -- you see CSI on television?

HM: You mean the crime stuff?

PF: Yes. She went to college for that. She's supposed to be an investigator. I don't know -- that's my granddaughter, Chrissie. Christina.

HM: That's a really interesting field.

PF: She's a smart kid.

HM: So she's doing the science side of it?

PF: Right now she's working in a bank. She works in the same bank -- the same company her mother worked for, my daughter-in-law, but two different branches. Chrissie's a good --

HM: And they're not in Hoboken, right?

PF: No. Barbara, my daughter-in-law is at Belleville, and Christina is in Clifton, I think.

HM: And do they come to Hoboken to visit?

PF: Sometimes. Barbara would.

HM: And their thoughts about --

PF: I laid the law down one day, when they were first married. I said, "Look. You come here because you want to, not because you have to. If you think you have to, stay away." They come every couple of weeks. We have dinner. I'd cook dinner. My wife -- we'd both cook dinner. I would go over there for dinner. My daughter-in-law is a good egg. They're like Mutt and Jeff. Barbara's 4'11", Bill is 6'3".

HM: I love that.

PF: The first time I met Barbara, we had the "ambulance club" dance, and Billy said he was going to bring his girlfriend up. So he walked in, and I said, "Where's your girl?" "She's outside." I walked out, I come back in, "Billy's where's your girlfriend?" All I saw outside was a kid in a white suit, who was about that tall. But she's a good egg.

HM: And your home -- you traded cooking? Or your wife was the main cook? Or you were the main cook?

PF: It depended upon -- I found that, later on, every time my wife cooked she didn't eat. Because it wore her out. We went to a wheelchair exposition in Edison, and what they did was they put a hydraulic lift in it, so from the handlebars you could flip a switch and raise the seat up. The seat would go up about that much.

HM: So she could work at the stove.

PF: Yes. But still, she wouldn't eat. So I said, "Now I'll do the cooking."

HM: Were you a good cook?

PF: Pretty good.

HM: I remember when we first started to talk to each other, and you had the hot pepper things. And I would give you what I thought were hot peppers, and you would laugh at me. "That's not a hot pepper!" [Laughter]

PF: Those are candy, compared to what I have.

HM: It was so funny. In the meantime, the veins were standing out on my head, I'm sweating, and my tongue was numb. And you were like, "That's not -- !"

PF: There was a woman at No. 6. She's not there anymore. I used to give her a jar of peppers, and give the woman down here [#17] a jar of peppers. They loved them.

HM: Their heads didn't explode? They lived to tell the tale?

PF: I must have around twenty jars around here.

HM: So were you growing the peppers?

PF: I was growing them back here. I learned how to cook them, jar them.

RF: So are you the senior member in this Terrace, do you think?

PF: The lady next -- I'm eighty-two, she's eighty-six or eighty-seven. Somewhere in there.

RF: And what is her name?

PF: Her maiden name was Clancy.

HM: That's "Lorenzo."

RF: Oh. Right. Right.

PF: She originally lived down in No. 19. We had an Italian contractor, they lived next door. They moved out, and they moved up this way. There were quite a few members of the family, and one by one, they died.

RF: I haven't seen her for a long time. Sometimes they referred to you as the mayor of the Terrace, right?

HM: And why is that? Because you're the nicest person on the block?

PF: I have no idea. Usually, if I go out and I see anybody new, I go and talk. They just sold No. 12, and I see this guy walking up and down. I went out -- "Can I help you? Look! Can I help you? You're walking up and down the street like you're casing the joint!" "I'm a real estate agent, okay?" We watch over our people in there.

HM: He could have just said that.

PF: Oh, I watched him. The real estate agents in Hoboken [unclear] they put a combination lock on the door. So you watch them.

HM: It's good to watch. [interruption]

RF: So that's why they call you the mayor. You're not afraid to let people know what the deal is.

PF: I talk to them, and I'll call the cops. I have no problem calling the cops.

RF: Are you going to ask him about the film?

HM: Oh, yes. You had mentioned *On the Waterfront*. How did you come to be in it?

PF: My wife was in a car. She said to me that they were filming *On the Waterfront*. So we drove down there. She sat in the car, and I sat outside. The director come over and said, "You want to be in the movie?"

HM: But you went down just to watch? Or you went down to see if you could get in.

PF: To just watch. In fact, it was the last scene of the movie. When I did that scene, they wrapped it up. It was over.

HM: The last scene being when he's stumbling through the crowd? Which scene are you talking about?

PF: The scene that I was in.

HM: Which scene was that?

PF: When they said, "If Terry don't go to work, we don't go to work." That was the last scene shot.

The director said, "That's a wrap." I got involved. I was supposed to stand -- he told me to take my glasses off and look up. Instead, I looked up here. The director said, "Stop." He pointed to me and said, "Don't look at me. Look up there." So they did it again.

HM: So they'd have it facing the right way.

PF: I got paid \$2.00 for that.

HM: But you're in film history.

PF: Would you like my autograph?

HM: Yes. When we finish the booklet, you can autograph it. And what was that like?

PF: I just stood there. I took the glasses off. I had a little [unclear] on my side.

HM: And when the film came out -- did you look for yourself?

PF: I watched that movie about five or six times --

HM: When it first came out, or in general?

PF: When it first came out -- because then I saw all the guys I worked with, before I actually watched the story of it. I knew who the players were portraying.

HM: You mean you knew the real-life people. Do you want to tell me more about that?

PF: They kept out of the way. Just mind your own business. You stay safe.

HM: Well, you had already left. You weren't on the piers anymore.

PF: I worked there for a short while, and I said, "I've got to get out of here." I got a job driving a car carrier for automotive. [interruption] I quit driving the car carrier because it was seasonal. Your cars ran out. If they were going to come up with a new car, then you had like a month where there's no work, because there's no

cars. Then you started driving cars again. I said, "I can't do it. I got to get me a job."

HM: Yes, because that was part of the problem -- you said you didn't like the other -- in addition to the other stuff.

PF: I was so used to going out to a place and coming back with the car carrier -- when you work freight, you don't go someplace and come directly back; you call in. Then they would send you someplace, by a dispatcher who knew about this. He said, "Look, you're not driving a car carrier anymore; you're driving a freight trailer."

HM: Interesting. So you have to think about it in a different way.

PF: You worked your job -- the company worked. I wasn't driving a car carrier anymore.

HM: Right. And you worked a route, instead of delivering --

PF: After a while I got a route. They started me downtown. Eventually, I would work my way up, and I wound up going up to Riverdale. You get to know your customers. You know who to deal with.

HM: But there's something nice about that. In a way, it's less repetitive than the car thing -- because you're just going back from the same place.

PF: The only thing I didn't like -- you used to get personal effects. Maybe somebody's got a trunk, they're up on the third floor, and they want you to haul that trunk up to the third floor. No!

HM: I couldn't do it.

PF: Driving a freight trailer is a whole lot different.

So I stayed there, and I retired from there. I retired because my legs gave way, at the age of fifty-six, fifty-seven. I got to the point where I couldn't stay up. It appears, in the wintertime, because it would get so cold, I would rub my legs, to keep them warm. "I've got to

get out of this." I talked to my wife. I could retire, and I did.

HM: And the union was good enough that you had some --

PF: I had the age, I had the time in. You'd be surprised how much they knew the days I worked, the days I didn't work. They added everything up, and I got the paperwork, and I filled all the paperwork out, along with a picture of mine. The only thing is, I forgot to sign the back of the picture. They sent it back to me.

HM: So that delayed everything?

PF: That delayed it another month. I said, "Just put my name on it." They can't do that! I had to take the photograph off the sheet, sign my name on the back, seal it, put it back in another envelope, mail it registered mail, and send it out again. Then I get my pension check. One of the guys I worked with -- John -- he worked right until he was sixty-five. He lasted a month, and he died.

HM: Did he know he was ill? Was it unexpected? Wow.

You know, I've heard that happens kind of frequently. I mean, people who live to work, or that's all they know, and they're kind of afraid to retire. A lot of times they --

PF: Oh, I was more interested in coming home to my wife and my family.

HM: Well, you had the right perspective.

PF: I had my wife and two boys. When I got tired, I took the day off, or the weekend off.

HM: You were a sensible person. You didn't get involved in local politics or anything, did you? You stayed clear of all that stuff?

.

PF: I stayed away from it.

HM: It can get a little rough.

RF: Are there people in town that you grew up with on the block, on Third and Madison, that you still run into? Not too much?

PF: I don't know anybody on that block anymore.

RF: Except, I guess, Biggie.

PF: 300, 302, 304 is gone. Biggie's not there anymore. His son-in-law runs it. [Biggie's Clam Bar] In fact, he's got another place. I have a distant cousin I rarely see.

RF: When did the stores start to disappear from that block. Now what do you have? You have a cleaner's on the corner, across from 302. You've got Biggie's. But everything is apartments.

PF: He had a store on the corner of Fourth and Madison Street that sold women's clothes. All good stuff -- blouses, bras, panties, slips. Anytime I needed a gift for my wife, when she was working -- she wore a white blouse. That's where I used to go.

HM: Where did she work?

PF: She was a secretary at City Hall. The Street Department. Hughie McGuire was her boss; Johnny Grogan was the mayor at the time.

HM: You had to have an Irish last name. Could she change her name? To Freda.

PF: He even said that. "How could you change from McLaughlin to Freda?"

RF: Eileen, next door, worked at City Hall, too, right?

PF: Her granddaughter worked there.

HM: Yes. Later. And how long did she work at City Hall?

PF: Until she got sick. She wound up with Crohn's disease. She went from 118 pounds to sixty. She was so thin she had to be carried. Her doctor -- we got a doctor up in Cliffside Park - [Doctor] Gilligan. He tried

everything he could think of to try to keep her stable, because she couldn't leave the house. He went away to a medical convention, they started talking shop, and they'd say, "I got a patient like this." "This is what I gave, what I prescribed for her." He'd come home and he "did the same thing," and got her better. It worked. The only thing was, she was so weak I was giving her B-12 shots once a week -- B-12 and B-complex shots, and I was paying the doctor. It was costing me \$30 a week just to give her shots. I said, "I can't take this." He said, "All right. I'll show you what to do." He gave me a hypodermic needle and an orange. He showed me how to load the needle, clear it, and insert it. So instead of \$30 a week it cost me thirty cents to give her a shot. So I was doing that, right along.

HM: You were helping her. B-12 can recharge you.

PF: She slowly recovered.

They told us early on there would be no children. I was looking at her across the dinner table -- she's sitting over there [on the other end] -- I called her "Kid." I said, "Kid, you're pregnant." And she says to me, "You're

out of your mind." I said, "Take it from me, you're pregnant." She was pregnant.

When you think about it, in hindsight, it was kind of dangerous. Because she walked with crutches. It was like getting -- [gestures that she'd be unbalanced in front] -- but she held together.

HM: Not just once -- twice.

PF: Right from the beginning they knew, right away, it was going to be a Caesarean section. And six years later, I said the same thing. That's when Scott was born -- two healthy boys. Six years later, she said, "Don't start. Don't start."

HM: When you think about it, that is amazing.

PF: That's how much doctors know. That'll show you how much doctors know.

HM: Well, that's a whole other thing.

PF: The only problem we had was, when Bill was born I went down to the hospital and picked her up. I knew when we parked [out] here, I was going to carry my son in. I'd never handled a baby before. I was a wreck. My wife said, "He's not going to break!" I had him like this. One week later, I tucked him under my arm. "Let's go."

HM: Like a football. Well, it's true. They seem so --

PF: I had to learn how to change diapers.

HM: And their heads are soft, so you worry.

PF: You know what surprised me? When you touch the top of a baby's head, there's a hole there.

HM: Yes. I know. Everything isn't fully formed yet. It's scary.

PF: And he had a double crown. Bill had a double crown.

HM: What does that mean?

PF: When you look at the top of your head, your hair sprouts up. He had two of them, one on each side.

HM: So, anything else? When we go through the transcript, there will probably be extra stuff I want to ask you. Is there something you want to tell us, that we didn't ask you about?

PF: Just that I met and married my girl.

HM: We're going to need to get some pictures from you. I don't know if you want to do it now? Or you want to wait?

PF: What kind of pictures are you looking for?

HM: Oh, family pictures. Pictures of you. Pictures of Edna. The kids.

PF: I have a picture of Edna as a kid.

HM: That would be nice. And pictures of you as a kid. Do you have any of those?

PF: Some.

HM: You don't have to do it now. But just start to look around. Because you've seen the other booklets. We won't use all of them.

PF: I probably told you -- there's a picture on that back page. My wife is in it.

HM: I know. But better to have something like this, where you can really see her, than to have one where she's just a little dot.

PF: I've got a picture of Dominic the shoemaker, standing outside the "tavern," with a girlfriend.

HM: That's what I want.

PF: She looked for that girlfriend for a long time. She never found her.

HM: She probably got married, so you couldn't find the last name. Dominic the Shoemaker photo. I'm making a note of it. With Edna.

PF: I've got a picture of Edna out here, in a scooter, early on.

HM: And pictures of you, too. Because it's from your point of view, so we have to have pictures of you.

PF: I have albums and albums of photographs.

HM: Well, when the transcript is done I have to bring it for you to look at, anyway. And there may be things that she can't understand, so you're going to have to fill in some things. And then we'll look at photos, too. How's that? Instead of doing it all now. Because it's hard to go on, and on, and on.

PF: There are photo albums here, and I've got photo albums upstairs. My wife gets angry because, she says, "You keep taking the same pictures." I say, "Yes, I do take them." But you'll find that people get older. You

can't take a picture of them and stay young. People get old." Like my daughter-in-law's mother and father. They had dark hair; now they've got gray hair.

HM: Well, that's what pictures are about. They're a little trapping of time.

RF: We're scared to look at the old ones.

PF: My wife, later on, used to go like this. [Holding her hand out.] "Don't take my picture."

HM: We don't need that many. [interruption] She had a very firm personality. So why was she worried ?

PF: Her biggest deal is this family. I got that bed -- if you don't like it --

HM: Did she imagine that people thought more of it than --

PF: That's supposed to be a dining room, not a bedroom. Does it bother me?

HM: If she could have had it another way,
she would have had it another way.

PF: As my grandkids said, "Climb on the bed
and go to sleep." How many diapers did I change on that
bed?

HM: I'm sorry that she was unhappy with
that.

PF: She was a good person. She's good. I had
a good life with her. She was my best friend.

HM: I'm glad we got the story down of you
meeting her. I remember when you told me on the street, and
I was so excited. I said, "We've got to get that down on
the tape recording."

PF: I remember Father Coyle, when we were
getting married -- she got up on the altar, and he grabbed
her and said, "Pat, I got her - run! " And my wife went,
"Huh?" We had a four-day honeymoon.

HM: Where did you go?

PF: Atlantic City. I worked for Continental Baking -- Wonder Bread -- and I couldn't get anymore than four days. And when I came back, they said, "What the heck are you doing here?" I said, "Well, you only gave me four days." He said, "Get outa here. Go home."

HM: But by now you were already here. You were in Hoboken.

PF: I also fell asleep. [Laughs] I worked Tuesday night and all day Wednesday. I worked a double shift. It was a hot summer day, I went around the corner and got a beer, came back, and I slipped onto the bed and fell asleep. I woke up at 7:00 the next morning, and my wife's screaming.

HM: Oh, my god. That's so funny.

PF: Right after that, I had to keep the water running. "I'm awake. I'm awake."

HM: That's some beer.

RF: When you worked for Continental, was that in the '50s? 1950s?

PF: Right after I got married. I was a relief driver. I used to go -- Sunday night I would go to Trenton. Monday night -- no. Sunday night I would go to the depots, both Asbury and Trenton. Monday I went to Trenton. Tuesday I went to Asbury. Wednesday afternoon I went to Brooklyn. Thursday and Saturday I was off.

RF: And were they making Wonder Bread at that time?

PF: They made the Wonder Bread here. Brooklyn made the rye and whole wheat bread. It was up at 14th Street that they made "cupcakes." I worked for them, too.

HM: Well, everything was here then, when I think about it -- talking about Hostess, and Continental, and the stores.

PF: There was everything in this town. You didn't have to leave this town.

HM: For work, you didn't have to leave, and also, just for every supply you could possibly want.

PF: We used to walk up to the riverfront and come home again. But that was a lot of time -- I drove a truck, so for four years I wasted on the "pier thing," I would have retired earlier.

HM: But you almost had to do the pier thing, then realized it wasn't for you. It helped you because you got the \$1,500 -- not that it was good that you got injured.

PF: That's true.

HM: It was all meant to be.

PF: I got the check.

HM: And you were done.

PF: All the checks, the paychecks I got -- I think I signed my paycheck ten times. She signed it.

HM: Because she was the money manager. Is that why?

PF: Yes. And when I did sign my paycheck, they wouldn't cash it --

HM: -- because they said, "That's not your signature."

PF: There's a bank -- in fact, it's still there, right at the bus station -- New Jersey Trust --

RF: It's another name now.

HM: Now it's Capital One, but it was New Jersey trust for a long time.

PF: She's sitting in the car. I signed my check, and they won't cash it.

HM: She's your banker.

So I think that's it. Right? We'll stop.

PF: See, all the money I made I gave to her.
I gave her money. I'd leave here with \$20 in my pocket.

HM: She did okay, you said.

PF: One of the guys I was working with, he
said, "You're stupid. You're letting your wife know what
you're making." I said, "Why? You don't? How many children
you got? You've got five kids, and you say you give your
wife \$50? Who are you kidding?"

HM: Good for you.

PF: I said, "You're right. The only reason
[unclear] to have money in the bank, go on vacation. I've
got money in my pocket."

HM: It's about something else, when someone
does that.

PF: They gambled a lot.

HM: That's what I mean.

PF: In the driver's room, there's a basement. If you'd go there, the guys are -- how the hell could you go home on a Thursday night with no money in your pocket? I used to put the check in my pocket, come home, and hand the check to my wife. She knew exactly what I made.

HM: She did the right thing, marrying you. You had to chase her, but she did the right thing.

PF: I chased her until she caught me.
[Laughter] You people want tea or coffee or something?

RF: We're okay. We had before we came over.

HM: We're going to test our two recorders. Thank you. I will come back with the transcript. It will take a little while.

END OF INTERVIEW