

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Women's History

Personal Experience

O. H. 857

LISA ARMENI

Interviewed

by

Danna Bozick

on

January 28, 1988

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Women's History

INTERVIEWEE: LISA ARMENI

INTERVIEWER: Danna Bozick

SUBJECT: Water department, laborer, construction,  
electronics

DATE: January 28, 1988

B: This is an interview with Lisa Armeni for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by Danna Bozick, at Ms. Armeni's home, on Thursday, January 28, 1988.

Could you tell me a little bit about your family, where you were born, and anything else that might come to mind about your family?

A: I was born in Youngstown, went to Ursuline High School, and graduated in 1980. I live with my mother and father. All my life, we were very close. I have a brother, Sam, who is three years older than me. We get along so-so.

B: (Laughter) Regular family.

A: Yes, he's married. He's got two beautiful kids. My father died in 1982. He died in April of 1982. I began my job, with the Water Department, in January of 1982, and he was kind on my boss, which was really different.

B: He was your boss?

A: He was my boss.

B: That's interesting.

A: Yes, he wasn't too well liked. A few people didn't like him, I should say. Possibly because he was a boss.

B: He was a supervisor?

A: Yes, he was a supervisor. Me, being his daughter, also is kind of rough--like a favoritism type thing.

B: Did other people see it that way?

A: A lot of people saw it that way, but I don't really feel like he did show me favoritism. Actually, he was harder on me because he didn't want it to look that way.

B: Did you have to take a test? Is that Civil Service?

A: Yes. What happened was that when I went into the job, I was not tested right away, to get into the job. As I was there about four or five months--or, it had to be about two months--then a job came up, then a test came up for my job. So, I passed the test, with about a ninety-eight percent, and got into it. So there was no problem there about keeping my job and knowing my job. It was just kind of a wide scan thing--basic stuff.

B: How old are you?

A: Twenty-five.

B: Okay. I wasn't sure. We were trying to figure it out the other day. I wasn't sure.

A: Whether I looked that old?

B: No, I thought you were younger.

A: Oh, okay. Thank you. I'm starting my seventh year, now in January, at the Water Department.

B: How long did your father work there?

A: Well, he worked for the city on and off, and he also worked for the State of Ohio. For the Water Department, I would say about three or four years before I came.

B: What was his job?

A: He was a superintendent of yard construction--in the yard itself. Let's see, how can I explain this? He did a lot of ordering of parts. He had a few guys under him, but he didn't have a whole group--like in construction or in the meter department--he was just basically on ordering, things like that--pricing, taking

bids, if you were to bid on something, and along that line.

B: Did your mother work?

A: My mother is the Seventeenth District Committee Woman for the State of Ohio. She's been there for about twenty-five to twenty-six years. She enjoys it. She enjoyed--she and my father, before he passed away--being involved in politics.

B: How did she get into that?

A: My father was always a real outgoing guy. He always wanted to meet people and get involved with things. He was involved in the boys club and different things along that line. He like it because politics is real outgoing and open, and he traveled a lot. He enjoyed it so he kind of got her involved, and she enjoyed it and just kept up with it and. . .

B: It sounds like she must have had a flair for it, though, if she got that involved.

A: Yes, I think deep down inside--because she was kind of a shy person, but she still--down underneath--was outgoing. She enjoyed that; she got a high out of it. My father did too, so that was like their interest, not really a hobby, but a type of hobby.

B: What does that involve--being a Committee person?

A: She does a lot of secretarial stuff. She doesn't get paid for her job, but there is a lot of paperwork that she has to do. I don't know how involved she is. She has to go to different meetings in Washington, meet with congressmen, and different meetings with the Governor--Dick Celeste--so I've gotten to meet a lot of these politicians, which was nice, throughout the years. Dick Celeste stayed at our house anytime he was in town, which was real nice--to meet a different side of somebody. Instead of a politician, which was on TV, and talking this and talking that, just to see him as a man that is just a normal person--a sit at home type thing.

B: What about Dagmar? Did you get to meet her too?

A: Yes, we got to meet her and her family--her sons--they had a place up in Cleveland. For the Fourth of July, they have--they live kind of across the street from a

park--and on the Fourth of July, they have fireworks there, which isn't real close, but you could see them from the house. On the Fourth of July, they would invite us up, which was really nice. They were just laid-back. Totally different than what people would think, that see them on TV, and they were totally at home. No politics were talked, and it was just, "Hey, forget about that. Leave that at the office, this is home."

B: That's nice. Is that basically the only job that your mom had? Her involvement with politics? She didn't work outside the home?

A: Well, we also have a bonding company, called Armeni Bonding Company -- ABC Bonding, and she was involved with that, with my father when he was alive. Now she took it over, after he passed away, but she wasn't really involved like day-to-day work-type schedule. She was always involved in the community with just different--whatever she wanted to do.

B: You said that you've been at the job you're at now for seven years?

A: I'm starting my seventh year now, in January.

B: Was that your first job, then?

A: Well, I worked little jobs--different fast food restaurants.

B: How was that?

A: (Laughter) It was okay. It was good to meet the public.

B: You worked the counter?

A: Yes. I liked it, but after awhile, it wore me down. I had different little things along the way--like, I worked for a security place, as a secretary, and I enjoyed that also, because I met the public and answered the telephones. It wasn't really secretarial--I kind of had the office to myself. I like that.

B: It sounds like you like interacting with people?

A: Yes, I do.

B: Do you do that on your job now?

A: That's why I like my job also, because I am out at different places on the street, not just within the City of Youngstown. I'm out in Boardman, Austintown--the water system goes out pretty far. So it is a big area where I can go out and meet people who come along and say, "Oh, what kind of work do you do?", and "This looks interesting." Then I explain my work. I like it. I do enjoy it.

B: What do you do on the job? What sort of duties do you do?

A: Right now, all I really do is--my classification is a laborer, and that's kind of a wide span, it's not a title job, where you just do this. I do all kinds of things. I cut grass. I drive a dump truck. I go up to wherever they are working, and they dump all the waste that they don't need where from the road as they're digging. I go and basically dump it, come back with the slag to fill the hole--different shoveling. I do repairs to the main line, itself. It's out of my classification, but occasionally, I do work out of my classification. I work repairing the lines, service work, putting services into buildings, businesses, homes . . .

B: Sounds like a non-traditional job for a woman.

A: Yes, very non-traditional. I am the first, and the only woman working for the water club, especially in construction. I don't think anywhere else in the city...There are a couple of policewomen. The street department had a couple of women, but not doing construction work--they are pumping gas, along that line, but there are no other women.

B: Did you see it that way when you first started into it?

A: No, when I started, I didn't start right there. I started just passing out parts to the men. I was in the store room. They would come in and ask for drills and hammers--different things like that--and I would just assign it out, and pump gas. That was basically my job. I was in the yard--nothing really heavy, or lifting--and I enjoyed that for awhile. But then, after my father passed away, it seemed like I had to start fighting a lot harder to keep my job. They moved me around. They then moved me as a secretary, which was real nice--I was inside.

B: Was that typical? Did they move people around a lot?

A: As a laborer, you can be moved wherever. Like I said, I don't have a title that tells me this is the job I do.

B: So it's sort of at their whim, almost that you. . . ?

A: Yes, they can move you. They can't move you from day to day, as a secretary, then put you back out on the road. They moved me downtown. It was temporary--they needed help--was actually how it was put to me.

B: This was when you got moved to being a secretary?

A: Yes, I knew they did need help, and I felt like it was a good move. The wage was the same, like I said. You just keep your title. You don't get any title, or go lower or higher. And I enjoyed that because I met people. I saw how things were run down at the Water Department, the offices, and worked with the computers--things like that. I enjoyed that part also. I was able to go throughout City Hall--go get copies made, and mail runs, or whatever business I had to do. So I got to meet people in City Hall also--people that I wouldn't have even known because I was out on the road--and what was done throughout City Hall in different departments.

B: How long did you stay, doing that?

A: I would say about a year, maybe a year and a half. Then there were some difficulties. I was doing my job properly, but my boss, the Water Commissioner, was kind of coming around saying, "The women are complaining about you, because you're all over City Hall helping. That's not in your job classification. I tell you just to sit here and do this work," I couldn't understand it. What they were looking at and what I was looking at were two different pictures. I felt like I was helping everybody, and they felt that either I was getting in the way or I was getting too out-of-hand, I was just too outgoing. They put their finger down and said, "Hey, you sit there. This is what you do. You answer the phones. That's it." "Don't learn anybody else's jobs." "Don't help anybody else." "You can't be walking around. You can't be going over here and going over there. . . ." So it became a hassle--to the point that I was taking off a lot of work. This was when it began. I felt like, "Why should I go to work?" I had sick time, vacation time, and off time, and all that, so I

didn't go. My boss said, "Well, if you keep taking off work, I will move you back down," I felt that I shouldn't be threatened like that. If I don't feel like going to work, my job's going to be that bad, and I have the time, then I am going to take off.

Well, I took off, and he did move me back down to construction. I was down in construction for awhile. I tried to fight for a few jobs along the way. I wanted a meter reader job when I was downtown, and it was in the office. It first goes to the office, then it goes down to construction, then it goes to City Hall, then it goes to the public if nobody want it. So I said, "Let me sign this. Maybe I'll get a little raise, a little different type job--walking exercise, healthy stuff, outside--I enjoy being outside, and he refused them. He said I should sign under construction since that's where I originated from and I was his temporary. My signing under that list, there were a lot of people above me, so somebody else did get the job, which they deserved because they did have the seniority. When I got moved back down to construction, I felt that I should move up again. Maybe I should sign for another job--just keep signing for jobs, bidding on them to see what's going to happen here. So, I bid on a job, and they said that I didn't have the seniority. I said, "Well, I don't understand. If I couldn't bid on a job down in City Hall, they said I was in construction, and that's where all my time was, then this is where all my time should have stayed."

It was a big hassle trying to explain to them that I did have the seniority, and them saying that I didn't, and they didn't offer me the job and it went on and on and on. Then I did go to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission with it, and fought for it and fought for it, because they had put a gentleman that had less time on the job--for ninety days--and I said that I should have the job, or at least, the chance to do it. Well, I did win my case. They basically said that they made a mistake, and that they thought that I had lost my seniority, but I didn't; so it would never happen again.

I still fought for the job. Again, you know, they put gentlemen, that have less time in, into jobs which they at least have to offer to me. We have a contract, and a union, and it's all written out. They just overlook me--just walk by like, "Well, what are we going to do with Lisa today? Oh, we'll have her clean." They overlook me when it comes to taking somebody out of



classification and moving them up. My time should stand.

B: Did you get the job now? Is that the job you have now?

A: No, this is called a maintenance man helper. It's the next class up for me. What's funny is that I fought so long for the job, and I realized that the harassment is not going to stop, and the discrimination is not going to stop even if they give me the job. I feel that, being a woman, a woman has to prove themselves twice as hard as a man. That's what I have to do. I don't have to just do the job, and do it well. I have to prove that I can do the job, and do it well--in front of everybody. The man could just do it half-assed, or whatever you want to call it. That's okay, because a man did it. It was done, and it's okay.

I feel like I should better myself, and go to school, and get an education, and try to go into a different field, in a job that I would enjoy doing; if it's in a man's world, or if it's a secretary job, or whatever it's going to be. Right now, I'm taking electronics, and I enjoy it. I want to see if this is the field I want to get into.

What's funny is that I'm going to turn down the raise so I could further myself in education. I have more time to work on the books. I have less of a hassle at work. I don't have to put up with this--you know, this guy's telling me to do this, and I did it wrong, and to do it over again, and just giving me bad jobs to do. If water runs for weeks at a time, it's a very dangerous job, and it's a very hard job to work on. They would send me out on a job like that, just to make it a little more rough on me. I feel like, "Why should I put with all that when I have education now?" And that's where I want to go.

B: Do they know, yet, that you're turning it down?

A: They kind of do know because I have about three more days in order to sign up, and I kept telling everybody that I'm turning it down. Nobody will sign up for it because I am the one with the most seniority so the job is automatically mine. I just have to sign the papers, and that's it.

B: Would it be moving up into a different department again? Would you be starting all over?

A: I wouldn't move up to a different department, I would move up to a different classification.

B: You would be working with the same people?

A: I would be working with the same people on a different type job. My job description would be repairing main line breaks--that's it. Services, hydrants--they couldn't tell me to go cut grass. Well, they could tell me, but they would have to pay me the wage. They couldn't tell me to be a secretary, though, downtown. I was a telephone operator for awhile. They also moved me around in a whole different department to get rid of me. They still couldn't get rid of me; I had to come back. I've just been back and forth, all around, and I even signed up for a job in the computer center. I was going to take a \$5,000 cut in pay, a year, to just get out of the water department, to just go on with my life, and be with normal people in an office, working with a computer. Programming it at my own pace. They refused it. I don't know whatever happened. I didn't push the issue because I thought, "Hey, if they're not going to give it to me, I have to go around and fight all over again for a job that pays less, and have more headaches, probably." So I took a little test. I had to go to the computer and type things into it. I have a certificate in key punch, so they could see that I have it. I was a little rusty at doing it, but I caught on after I started up. I explained to the guy, I said, "You know, I know I got a lot of this wrong, but I do know how to do it. It's just going to take awhile for it to come back to me." I don't know what kind of grade I got on the test. They never got back to me.

B: Do you think it might have been politics?

A: Yes, I think probably politics had a lot to do with it? But they have their ways of getting around it. Like, I was suspended for fifteen days for an incident; they said I'd lose bidding power if I was suspended. I was bidding on a job. They also said it was a demotion, instead of a promotion for me, and that they didn't have to offer it to me. I really felt like I didn't want the job. It wasn't like, "I love this job; this is what I want to do the rest of my life." I felt like I just wanted to leave the water department, get out, wherever.

B: It sounds like you got pretty disgusted with all this rigamarole back and forth?

A: Yes.

B: Was it disruptive to your life in general?

A: Yes, I feel like it is. I've gained a lot of weight throughout the years, because I get depressed going to work. And depression has a lot to do with not wanting to do anything, so you eat. I think that had a lot to do with it. I think I'm not really being as outgoing as I used to be. As I said, I enjoy being with people, meeting people, and going places, and just getting in my car and traveling, going to Dayton, going to Washington, just taking off. I wasn't that spunky person that I was. They degrade me a lot in my job. They make me feel like, "Why would you want to work a job like this, and do a job like this? You can't do it anyway." They kind of made me feel really low about myself. I shouldn't have to feel that way. My father died, like I said, in 1982. I was stuck with a lot of bills. I was stuck in the job. I had just bought a brand new car a month before, and here's me saying, "Hey, I don't know what to do. I'm making good money. Let me try it. Maybe I could further myself. Maybe I could be a secretary. Maybe I could go into the computer center. Maybe I could do something else." They just felt like I got trapped into it. I'm not a person to give up; I'm a fighter, and I felt like I should fight for this job, because I got in there and I shouldn't give up. But they did their darndest to try to make me quit. That's what they wanted to do. They wanted to make me miserable enough to make me quit, to just say, "I quit." And that's it, get rid of me.

B: It sounds to me like you're looking for a different motivation to work at this point in your life, though. You don't want to be motivated just by having to be there on that job.

A: Well, I tried to get involved with sports along the way, the past year, because the stress became too much and my health started getting to me, not that I'm that overweight, but your nerves get shot, your stress just gets to you; you can't eat, you can't sleep, and you're running around. So, I said, "Well, the best way--I read in an article--to get rid of stress, is exercise." I'm not the type to go out and jog and 5:00 in the morning and do all that, but I do enjoy sports. I played softball in 1982, and I liked that, so I said, "Well, let me try to go back to that." So I went back to softball, enjoyed it, and had a good time, and just

about work. I wasn't out to get into shape, or to hit a home run; just to go out and do it, so I enjoyed it. I said, "Well, I can't stop now." Then soccer season came right after that. So I told myself, "Well, now I want to play soccer. I just did it. I wasn't that good, but what the hell, I enjoyed it. That's how I took out all my frustrations. A lot of people were like, "Wow, how did you do that?" "You kill for the ball, and you die for it." Because I have so much built up inside of me that I have to get it out.

B: Do you think that sports can be a good release for women?

A: Yes, I do. I really do. I think that because you are playing sports co-ed, or just strictly with women, it's a union, a togetherness. There are other women out there; they're out there killing for the ball, and you're out there killing for the ball and you're giggling about it because it's fun. It's enjoyment amongst women. If you work a job with all men, or if you work all day with men and women, it's so much stress, and your family and your kids are yelling and screaming, this is just something that you go out and you do. It's not like you're exercising your body to death, or you have to be 100%, or you have to prove yourself. This isn't proving yourself to anybody. It's kind of proving yourself to yourself, but you don't have to go out and do it. You are doing it because you want to do it. I do.

B: Do you think everybody on the field has that same idea?

A: I don't know. I don't think so, because a lot of them are out there killing me, I know that. (Laughter) No, they were thinking that they were going to stick the ball down my throat. That's what they were thinking. No, I don't know what their attitude is. A lot of them enjoy sports. They are athletic. I don't really consider myself athletic. I enjoy different sports, but I can't say that I'm like a superjock walking around doing all this stuff. I also got a little bit into darts, because I felt like, "Let me get into something that's not athletic, but something that's good, something that I would enjoy and I want to better myself at." I got onto a dart team, also, among all this other stuff. I enjoyed it, because, well, it was in a bar, which was kind of bad because if you go into alcohol to get away from your other problems, I feel like that's just an excuse and you're just going to go

down the wrong road. I tried to quit drinking there for awhile, and I just went just to enjoy myself, not to get drunk. I walked out sober, one beer.

B: Do you think some women do use alcohol as sort of a frustration release?

A: Yes, I do. I have had some alcoholics in my family. Some are reformed and some aren't, and some have passed away from it. I saw how they lived their lives, and how they died from it.

B: I spent the afternoon talking to another person that's just coming to recognize her own alcoholism, and she talked to me about her family. I think that really scares a lot of people when you see it in your own family.

A: I think living right with it scares you, but it can also show you, "Well, I'm not like that person. I drink and I get fun." My family drinks--my brother or sister or whatever drank and they get mean. Or my father drinks and he gets mean. He leaves for three days. I don't do that. I'm outgoing, I'm fun. I'm not an alcoholic. I've been to a lot of AA meetings to understand alcohol. I want to understand alcohol. I have friends that are alcoholics, also, that I got to meetings with. I feel like it could happen to me, without my realizing. I could go out on my weekends and drink two days out of the week, and get totally wasted, and then have a beer after work.

B: Binge drink?

A: Yes, and then maybe I'm having one in the morning, before I got to work, not realizing that there is a beer there, and I'm thirsty and I just pick it up. I want to realize now that that bottle and what's in it could kill me. It does kill, and I can get hurt.

B: Do you think that people sometimes fool themselves with alcohol? "It's other people, but I'm okay, it's not me."

A: Yes. I have a friend that is into drugs. I have a lot of friends that are into drugs. That's how they feel. They read these articles, and they're like, "Wow, this guy just ruined his whole life by doing all those drugs, but me, I got a grip on it." I try to explain to you that drugs are a lie. I'm not lying to you. I'm

telling you that I'm going to be there, and I'm going to make you feel good by just loving you the way you are. But that drug isn't. That drug is going to make you a different person. It wants to draw you back, to keep being that different person. It's changing you, and it's going to get hooked on you and it doesn't care, because it has no feelings--it's just a pill.

B: Do you think people appreciate when you tell them that?

A: No, they don't like to hear that. Especially the ones that take the drugs. Maybe they don't want to hear it because they know it's true. I don't know.

B: Just let me tell you this: The woman that I talked to today told me that she had finally decided to do something about it, you don't know her either, I know you don't, she had decided to do something about it, and that somebody told her that. So I said to her, "How did you feel about that when they told you?" She said, "It really made me angry. I didn't want to hear it all." Now, it's about a year down the road, and she's changing her life around. So, they may not appreciate it at the time, but sometimes it's hard to hear and it takes awhile to sink in.

A: It will sink in. It will sink in. It's a long battle. I've seen a lot of people come back from it. I work with a couple of gentlemen that are alcoholics. I saw their struggles, and I respect them for it. There are men that I do work with that I do look up to. They're not all bad. It's not like I hate all men. I just hate the men that have come into my life and destroyed it. I'm still here. I do think alcohol is an escape. A lot of people might not think so. A lot of people say, "Well, I do drugs. . . "--and different things like that--" . . . but I'm okay." You hide from reality. A lot of my friends tell me that I go, and I try to escape, think about the past and all the good times, and that I live a lot in the past, which I see I do. Maybe that's my escape, but I think it's a lot healthier than going out and smoking a joint, or going out and getting wasted. That's the same thing. We're both running from it, but I run from it in a different way.

B: It sounds like you are working on some dreams for the future there. You're talking about changing your life.

A: I think what happened was that I just got so miserable in my job and said, "Forget this. I don't need this.

Nobody need this." And actually, it's kind of funny, I feel like they did help me to make myself a better person. By making my life so miserable, they made me see what I'm about and what I could be.

B: You had to face yourself sort of?

A: Well, not really face myself, but open up my eyes to myself, to myself inside. I felt like because they degrade me so much, I couldn't go anywhere. I was stuck, and it's a terrible trapped feeling.

B: That happens to women: getting depressed, feeling trapped and not being able to get out. Was there an instance or something that jolted you, or something that turned you around? Can you pinpoint anything in particular?

A: I don't know if I can pinpoint. Like I said, when you have enough of something. Like, if you're sitting in a room and you can't stand the paint; you want to paint it. You just come to the point and say, "I've got to paint it today. I don't care. Move everything out, I'm painting it." I think you come to a point like that. I'm kind of a religious person. I believe that the Lord works kind of slow in my life, maybe, but I think he makes my way. "Get off your butt, and get out there. You are somebody." He brought a lot of people in my life, made me feel like nobody, but recently I've had a few really nice friends come into my life. They have shown me that, "Hey, you are somebody." Like I said with sports, you feel like somebody. You know, you're doing it for yourself, but then, if you're really good at it, people come up to you and say, "Hey, that was really good. You really play soccer good. How long have you been playing?" And I just say, "Well, this is my first year. I don't know what I'm doing out here." That's good for your ego. That's good for women, because women are so into looking good, looking healthy, and they have to look good--all these advertisements and everything--and to go out there and hear it from another woman, I think it makes you feel. . . It makes you feel good coming from a man, but it makes you feel good coming from another woman, because women don't tell women, "You look good." You're out there trying to look good for the men.

B: I have heard people say that women actually dress and consider their appearance for other women, more so than for men. Did you ever hear that?

- A: Yes, I can see that to a point. I've heard that.
- B: You've mentioned advertising. Do you think that we fall prey to the image that's given off in the media, the magazines, on billboards, and the TV ads?
- A: Yes, I think that people feel that if they're not that image, that it lowers themselves--that they're lower than those people because they're so beautiful and they are dressed so nice. But they could have a personality like hell. Know what I mean? They could just walk by and say, "Who the hell are you?" People want to see that part. They don't see the whole person. They just see the outer person. I think a lot of people--especially a lot of women feel that if they're not that, they're nothing. If they're not like the woman on TV and like that woman on the magazine. . .
- B: Perfect?
- A: Yes, kind of perfect. . . That they're nothing. They're either that or nothing. You have to strive to do that.
- B: Do you think that's realistic that many of us are like that? I mean, are that perfect, and always just looking a certain way?
- A: Yes, I think a lot of people are like that a lot of the time. I think, deep down inside they do it for themselves to feel good about themselves. But I think they do it for appearance, like, "Oh, I wear Gloria Vanderbilt." And they do it because that shows something. If you have something on like that, somebody's going to turn their head, and say, "Wow, I've seen that coat at Saks Fifth Avenue. Do you shop there?"
- B: More or less making a statement that you have money?
- A: Yes, and that you have class. I think maybe that's a sign of class--"Look at that classy person." And everybody wants to be with that classy person, because everybody turns their head to that classy person. So, if you're classy and you're wearing that thing from Saks, I want to hang out with you.
- B: Do you think we could lose ourselves in pursuit of this image?



- A: Yes, I think we lose ourselves. I think we do, we become plastic; we become something that we might not really be. Maybe you like to walk around in holey jeans. You don't care if it's cool or not, but that's your favorite pair of jeans. That's what you want to wear, a leather coat, because you might not like leather at all. You become plastic. You bend to society, and society forms us. I watch TV, and it's just like whatever they put on--if it's got this beautiful woman and gorgeous looking guy, and it might look like shit--the public is going to buy it. Public is going to reach out. So, public forms us. They design these cars that are like boxes, but then they say, "Wow, it's fabulous." And it's not fabulous, but society is so bent toward it that everybody's like, "Yes, it's fabulous. I bought a new one, and it's fantastic." And you might not even like it.
- B: We could be led to believe what they want us to believe.
- A: Yes, I think society can do that. I think advertising can do that. If they advertise enough on it, and they say it's fantastic, and everybody else is looking fantastic driving it, turning all these heads-- or wearing it, or whatever--that it can, that advertising can bend you, make you a little plastic if you let it, unless you're a strong enough willed person to say, "I think that car's ugly," or "I don't like that," or "I don't feel like I have to wear that." I like this shirt, I'm going to wear it, and if it's out of style, it's out of style. Whatever.
- B: Did you say you're a religious person? Were you talking about spiritual sorts of. . .
- A: Yes, I'm Catholic and I pray a lot. I believe in the Lord very strongly. Sometimes I don't understand what He's doing with my life, or with the world, but I believe there is a God out there. I don't preach about it and say, "You've go to believe in God." I believe that you believe in your own God, that there is someone who put us here, and He is in our lives. I think that is beautiful. I'm not going to tell you that you have to believe in my God. There are just too many things that happened in my life that I couldn't explain. I can't really say, "Well, this man, he's a friend of mine, he takes care of me--that's

how I got this job." Just the people who come into your life, and how they have touched my life. You have to look at it that way. These people don't just come out of nowhere. It's not like you walk up to them and say, "Hi, do you believe in God?" God just kind of brings them around. You might bump into them somewhere. Hearing something from your family, sometimes, you don't listen too. They try to give you all this good advice. But experiencing it with somebody else might really change your life.

B: It sounds like there have been some people that have really influenced you, and helped to keep you on track, or I don't know how you would want to explain it.

A: Yes, a lot of good people. You find out who your real friends are when you are sitting there like a bump on the log at home, and so many people are used to seeing you out, it's like, "Oh well, if Lisa's here, she's here." But the ones that miss you give you a call and say, "How are you?", and you are like "Good-bye." You don't want to talk to them. "My job is hell." I bitched about my job to no end, everyday, everyday.

B: It sound like you had some people that stuck by you?

A: That's what I'm saying, you find out who your true friends are.

B: They waited it out?

A: Yes, they waited it out. I don't know why.

B: They were in there with you.

A: Yes, they were there all the way, and I guess I never realized that they were really there, until the end.

B: That's really important for us, isn't it?

A: Yes. They've been women. (Laughter) They've been women there to the end. I have to say that.

B: Do you think that shows something?

A: Yes, they're more understanding. They can understand. They try to understand what you're going through, what you're feeling. Maybe they're not there, and they don't understand the job, but they have trouble with their jobs. They go through the emotional times and I think

they have more feelings. There have been a few men in my life that are friends right now. They have been there to support me emotionally, but they're not there to the end if I really need them to understand me emotionally. They can understand, maybe, my problems working with men, because they work with women. They can understand that; they say, "I can understand, because we have a few women." But they don't understand the emotion of what I'm going through. I think that only another woman can do that--no matter what age, a mother, a sister, a friend, a cousin or relation. I think they can comfort you in a way that a man really can't. The women in my life have really comforted me. We're friends.

B: I was just going to ask you, would you call it friendship?

A: Yes, it sounds a little weird, but yes, it's a friendship. It's a close friendship.

B: A bonding?

A: Yes, I would say a special bonding that nobody could break apart. Once you're bonded like that, nobody can.

B: Do you have any good work stories?

A: Good work stories? Like what kind?

B: I don't know. You were just talking about how you enjoyed meeting people on your job, and talking to them. Sometimes people have good stories, like, "Oh, I remember back in 19--so--and--so when I . . .", or the dog that bit your leg, I don't know, just any. Got any good work stories?

A: My work stories aren't too good. With the public, they are. I flag traffic sometimes when they're out there working. You get people that drive by and say, "Wow, a woman." One time this one little old lady came by, and she's like, "Aren't you cold out here? Maybe you should go take a rest," and stuff like that.

B: She wanted to take you home and give you soup?

A: Yes, she wanted to take care of me. That was real cute. There are a lot of people that--when we're working on the streets, will bring out coffee.

B: Really?

A: Yes, which is real nice. The public isn't so bad. Sometimes the city thinks the public is always "on us." That's how city employees sometimes look at things, but they're not. They just want their water on. They want things done. Sometimes maybe they're out of work, and their bitter because you have a job. They have to look at it that way, but the people I work with sometimes don't. They just think they're out to get them fired. It's really not like that. I don't know if I have any stories.

B: So, sometimes you're working under emergency circumstances. You're talking about people wanting their water back on.

A: We have to shut down the water in order to work in some of the lines. If there is a main-line break, and it's split right across the entire pipe, we have to cut out a whole entire piece of pipe and put in a whole new piece of pipe. You can't really do that with the water running. Occasionally, you can work with the water running, but sometimes we have to shut off blocks at a time.

B: So, it's sort of like a crisis. Going in there, got to get it done.

A: Yes, you're in a hurry, but yet, you can't be like that. As long as we tell them ahead of time, "We are shutting off your water, prepare, put water someplace,"--or whatever.

B: You were talking about going into electronics. Do you have some idea of what it is that you're sort of working toward, or do you have some goal in mind?

A: What really got me interested in this is that I enjoy working with my hands. I do some mechanic work, which I enjoy. And one day, when I was a secretary at work, I saw a gentleman come in and repair our computers. I thought, "Boy, doesn't that look interesting. Let me see what's in there." You know me, got to know everything. So, I'm sticking my little nose in there, seeing what he was doing, what he's fixing, and how he's doing it. He had a three piece suit on, and he just looked all professional. I just thought that was too cute, so I said, "That looks real interesting." It's always been on my mind, but I haven't looked into it, as

in, "That's going to be what I'm going to do for the rest of my life." It was just something I was interested in. So, I started thinking about it and thinking about it. I called a couple of schools, went down to see what kind of classes they had, told them what I wanted to do, and they said, "Electronics, robotics, that's what you need." I don't know if I could do that, I was nervous at first, but then it's like, "Yes, let me give it a shot." As the class started, it was kind of dragging, talking about electricity and things like that, and it's like, "No, I don't want to talk about electricity. I don't want to wire houses. I want to repair computers." Now we're getting a little more into it, and it's like something new everyday. It's a field that's going somewhere everyday. When I talked to the gentleman that was repairing the computers, I said, "Do you just repair this one computer? Do you go all around the state? Do you go all around the country?" And he said that he's got his certain area, he goes on call, sometimes for twenty-four hours, and if a computer breaks down--like downtown Youngstown, that's where his area is at--he has to go out and repair it. He knows each computer, what's wrong with it, how old it is, what he just repaired on it, how it is used, if it's abused, and everything. I thought I'd like that. I would like to do something like that, where I work for a company and they also train me, and I'd get to go out and meet people. Because I'd go into the businesses--that's real nice--and I'd kind of get to know people, because I would probably have to go there at least once a month or so. Most things break down. You'd make your little spot checks along the way. That would be me, "How's your computer working?" and stuff like that. I would like that.

B: You were out of school for seven years?

A: Yes.

B: You weren't doing anything in between there, right?

A: No, not really.

B: So, you're really hopping back into it?

A: Yes, and it's shocking to the system. I go to work five days a week, and I go to school five days a week. It's like it's there, you give up everything.

B: Was it scary walking into that first class?

A: Yes, it really was. I missed the first week of school because I had to work afternoons on my job, so I was already a week behind. I kept going to my teacher, and I said, "I can't come at night. What's going on? What did you do?" and I'd go to him in the daytime. I said, "But I'll be there next week, I can't wait." Once I got into it, it was like, "Oh, I can't do this." It was too much reading, I don't understand it, and everything was going fast. Then, I got used to it. I knew I had to read at work. I knew I had to read when I came home from school. I knew I had to read on the weekends. You just keep going, understanding it, and not just reading and sitting there being bored with it--get into it, enjoy it. Don't think of it as, "This is school, and I have to do this work." Think of it as something you enjoy.

B: Do you think it makes a difference because it's something you want to be doing?

A: Yes, I do. I know that what keeps me going is that I don't want to be where I'm at now. This isn't like an escape; I've got to go to school, get another job, to get out of where I'm at. It's not the money. A lot of people think, "You're making good money," and that you could be making better money. I want to enjoy what I'm doing. I would probably stay at the Water Department for the rest of my life, if they would leave me alone, if I could advance a little bit, if I wasn't so degraded, and if people were proud to work with me like I'm proud to work with a couple of them. I would probably stay. But I know it's not going to be like that. That's like a dream world. I'm just going to be fighting the whole way.

B: Could you say something about how our happiness is tied up with the work that you do?

A: I think that if you're not happy in your job, you aren't going to perform it well. You're going to be under stress everyday. You're going to be miserable with yourself, because you're forcing yourself to do something you don't want to do. Like staying married, if you're both miserable, why force it? Marriage is supposed to be a togetherness. You're supposed to enjoy each other. You fight, but this isn't work. You're married, and home with each other. This is supposed to be a partnership, like being with your best friend.

When you go out for an evening, it's not supposed to be work. You're going out to enjoy yourself. Why feel that when you go to your job, you're supposed to enjoy it? You're supposed to put a part of yourself into the work. I think that it makes your work come out a lot better. If you're just doing--you've got your hammer and your nail, and you're just hammering--you're not creating anything, and you're not really interested in what you're going, it's not going to come out.

B: I bet you were a curious child.

A: Yes, I took everything apart. I did. I took radios apart, and TV's. I don't know. I used to always be taking things apart, but I'd never put them back together again. I'd just be bored with it; on to something else.

B: That's kind of been stifled for you, hasn't it?

A: Yes.

B: I hear excitement about this new field. You're going to get a chance to maybe develop some of that? Learn how to put it back together again?

A: Yes, I think I'd better. That's what I'm learning now--how to put it together, not take it apart. It's a little hard. I'm used to taking things apart. I am enjoying it. It gets a little rough.

B: Do you think that you would ever want to stay at home? Could you do that? Not work, maybe be supported by someone, and stay at home?

A: No. I can't quite see myself doing that. Not that marriage is out, or anything like that. But I'm not the type to have a family. It's not like I see myself having these little kids running around. I have my niece and nephew; I get enough out of them. I enjoy them to death. I love kids. But I am not--you've got to sit at home for nine months, have the kid, bring him up, and then send him to school. I want to be out in the world. That's why I enjoy being outside. It's like it's a part of the world. Sometimes, when you're in an office, it's like, "Is there a world out there?" All you see is four walls. I don't think I'd enjoy doing that.

B: Does your family understand that as a conscious choice?

A: Yes. Me and my mother are very close. I think she's proud of me in her own way, that I'm going to go out and get involved with something else. Sometimes I don't think that she's proud of me, but I can see how she is, because I fought a long time--in my job--and I didn't give up. I think she feels that I'm going to be the same way with electronics. I'm not going to give up. I might have to quit along the way--take my time with it--and start back up again. But I'm not going to quit with it. If I quit it, I'll go on to something else that I might enjoy. Maybe it's not with electrical stuff; maybe it's with something else.

B: I know other women that have decided that they don't want to have children, and that's a choice, but their families are always saying, "When are you going to settle down and raise a family?" They're just constantly asking them. I was wondering if you got that?

A: No, I really don't. Like I said, my brother has two kids; maybe my mother feels like he's got the kids. She probably does want me to settle down. Maybe she does want me to get married, find a guy and all that. I don't know. She doesn't really discuss it with me. It's more like, "What do you want to do with your life?" "Is this what you want to do?"

B: It sounds like you get good support there?

A: Terrific. My mother is a fantastic woman. She's my best friend. I could go to her with anything, any problem--talk about anything with her--my life, who's in my life, who is not, who I like, who I don't, who are my friends.

B: That's a great relationship.

A: Yes, it's fallen apart throughout the years, a little bit. For awhile there, she kind of drifted away, moved out to her own place, got away from me, had her life, and got involved with whatever she wanted to get involved with, and kind of got away from me. It hurt for awhile, because we were like sisters, then we were separated. But you do have to have that separation with your family in order to grow, because growth in a family can only go so far--that's it. Then you have to learn to grow away, or grow within yourself. It's something you can't do with your family. You can't take your family to school, and say, "Come grow with me in this



class." That's something you have to do yourself.

B: You've worked your way back, it sounds like?

A: To my family?

B: Yes, to a closeness.

A: I'm doing that now. My mom will come and spend a few nights with me, and we'll bum around together, do different things. That's real nice. It's getting back. It's not like we're torn apart totally. Maybe she was trying to let go of me a little bit. I don't know. I think that mothers should, that families should. I think that's very important to let your kids go out and experience things, because if they don't, they'll always wonder about it, wish they would have, and maybe regret that they didn't, and dislike you for not letting them. I babysit my niece and nephew a lot. I let my nephew do things. I don't do everything for him. I let him go and fall down the steps. (Laughter) No, he doesn't fall down the steps. But, I let him go out and see things and touch things, and ask questions about this and that. I don't feel that I should have to tell him, "No, don't do that." That's not right. I let him judge, make his own little decisions, and see that it's wrong. He comes and yells at me. I'll swear, or something, he'll yell at me. He'll say, "You're not supposed to swear. That's not nice." He's three years old. He's great. He's a good kid. He really is.

B: Teach them to be independent and they will be?

A: (Laughter)

B: He's going to come back and tell you?

A: Yes, probably. I think that when you're bringing up kids, you have to make them see that they are worth something; let them see that. Don't let them see, "You're not worth anything without me." I think kids can look at it that way. "If daddy or mommy is not there, then I can't do it. I'm not worth it." Like, "I don't need daddy and mommy, I can do this by myself."

B: It sounds like you've gone through that.

A: Yes, kind of.

B: And you came out the other side.

A: Yes, kind of.

B: And you came out the other side.

A: Yes, I don't know.

B: You're still coming out the other side.

A: Yes, still coming out the other side. I'm trying to.

B: What if you could give advice to a young woman, perhaps entering a non-traditional field, perhaps facing some of the situations? Are there things that you might tell someone going into a job situation like you've been in?

A: I think I would tell them, if they're going into it, that they can do it. That they should feel like just because a man is going to tell them, "You can't do it." . . . I think a woman should believe in herself; that she could do anything that she wants to do, that she could conquer anything, that she doesn't need a man to help her conquer it. I believe that it's going to be a hard struggle, but in the end she's going to feel better about herself, if this is what she wants to do, if it's not something that--"Well, I've got this job, and it's with all men, so I'm going to try it." If it's something that she wants to do, if this is her dream, then she should go after her dream. If you don't really go after it, I believe that if you give up on your dream you die. I would tell her that she does have to prove herself twice as much as a man, and that she should understand that just because she does the job, and she painted that wall, that it's going to be okay, because a man is going to see every mistake in it. If a man painted that wall, there would be no mistakes to even look for. She should understand that. I think that makes you a better person, and a better worker, because you know that job has to be done so well. If she's a strong enough person to go through that put up with that, in the end, she's going to earn a lot of respect.

B: You say that you are not necessarily an athletic person. Yet, do you consider yourself an extraordinary woman? That you've been able to do a labor job? Or is this something that you've developed into?

A: Yes, I think I've surprised myself. I know I wasn't as strong as I am now when I started my job. I know that I have to do a lot of lifting--it is a physical job, not all of the time, but part of the time. I have proved to

myself that I can do it, and I see other men that can't do it, that try to, and get frustrated. "Well, I can't do it. I don't understand, and I don't want to try it." At least I'd say, "I want to try it. Let me go down there and try it, and see how it's done." Most of the time, I feel like I'm going down there just to give the guys a hand; somebody that need it, like a togetherness, like a team. That's what we should be. We should be a team. But a lot of them don't want me on their team. Some of them don't want me in the ball field.

B: That hurts.

A: Yes, it does. It hurts a lot. It's a lot of pain that I don't want to see any other woman go through. I'd rather tell them before hand, "Hey, it's rough. Maybe you don't think it is. Maybe you think you're a strong person, but this will prove that you really are a strong person."

B: Where do you think that you got that drive to keep on trying, and that stick-to-it-ness?

A: From my father. He was a go-getter, and I spent a lot of time with him. I learned a lot from him. He was kind of like my best friend, too. Like I said, he let me do things kind of on my own, form my opinion about things. That's important for kids. I think I saw how much drive he had. He came from thirteen kids. He went into every kind of job that he could think of, just got out of it, and just went into another job, and just got out of that, and just kept going. He educated himself. He went to Youngstown State University for many years, in his younger days--not when I was born, I don't think he went back to school. I know he did have a lot of degree in things, which he didn't talk about. But I know he was well educated. He knew the streets; he knew people on the streets, and he was educated that way, too, and he got me educated that way. I think the drive is that if you want something, if you see that beautiful big house over there and you want it, nobody's going to hand it to you. You have to work for it. I think that is where the drive is. It's like, "Do you want to be where you're at now?" And I don't. That's how it is, but for women going into the field, if this is what they want, and it's the type of work they enjoy, I don't think that you have to prove to yourself that you can do it--like I said, you'll have to prove to others--but if you believe you can do it, proving it will just happen, because you believe in yourself, you know you can do it,

and you enjoy doing it. If you enjoy doing things on your job, it's going to show in the end. You're going to earn the men's respect. They're scared. They're just scared, because they're insecure with themselves. "She could do the job better than me." "I can't do that, and she can."

B: That must be very threatening.

A: Yes, you threaten their ego a little bit. If they would only understand that they could do it too if they tried. But I don't think that men think that way. They just think, "I can do anything, because I'm a man." But there are things that they can't do. If you're not mechanically inclined, how can you work on a car? If a woman is, she could get it done blindfolded. I feel like the world shouldn't look at a woman as a woman, like this is a woman, and that's a man; they should think of them as a person. I think that when men start realizing that women are people, and they do have brains--like a lot of people say, "Are you after my body? I have a brain." It's kind of a joke. It's kind of serious, too. Women do have brains, and they do want to put themselves into things, show you a better way, and put a little input in different places in the job. Men don't see that. Men see you walking through the room, and it's just like, "Oh, it's a woman, what does she want?" "Does she think that she could figure this out?" It's like, "Hey, look at my record. I might have a master's degree in electronics, and I know what's going on and you don't, so let me do it. Not that I'm a woman, and I'm better because I'm a woman; I'm better because I'm educated, because I know how to do it because of my brain." A lot of men don't look at it that way. They think a woman's place is in the home. That's it. They're old fashioned, and they're like, "That's where you belong, and you can sweep the floors, because we know you're a woman and you can do a good job at it." I'm not a good cleaner. You should see my apartment! A man could probably clean it better than me. It's just all stereotyped; that's why I think it's so rough for women to get ahead, in business, any type, even if it's not just construction, even if they're an attorney, even if it's a woman's field, it's still rough because if you're a woman, you're a secretary, you've got to look beautiful. We go back to the same thing again. In order for you to get ahead, you've got to be looking good for the boss, and giving him his coffee. There is nothing that shows--how about your brain?

B: Don't you think that some of that's changing now, though?

A: Yes, I think a lot of it is, but I still think that a lot of it's still there. Maybe because it's in my life. I haven't seen it out in the world, in other places. I'm just so closed in, in my own world.

B: Do you think that education is going to change that for you?

A: Yes, I could just see that the men accept me. There are only two women in my class; all the rest are men. The men accept it. They're just like, "Yes, if you can do it, you can do it." Usually, I don't see that from a lot of uneducated men. I think that the educated men are like, "Yes, we want to teach you. We want to show you. You can do it. If you want to do it, and you're here to do it, we're going to teach you how to do it."

B: And that's a difference in attitude?

A: Yes, because they're educated people, and they can see that if you want to get educated--no matter if you're a man or a woman, or whatever, black, white--you're here to get educated, and that's what they're there to do. They are there to teach you. They want you to know, because they know, and they're so excited about it. The teachers are very good. They are all excited--"I want to teach you this, and wait until you do this."--they are like kids with it, because they enjoy their work.

B: You were needing that excitement fed into your life?

A: Yes, I am all excited about it. But I still get down, and I still have my bad days. Work isn't as bad. It took me three years to fight to get where I'm at now. A lot of the men are like, "Why don't you shove it in their face. Now that you could get your raise, do it, and throw it at them." It's like, "No, I did it, and I know I could have it. And right now I can't have it." It's not like I wanted it and now I'm throwing it away. I fought for it, and I could get it, and that's enough for me.

B: Sounds like you proved something to yourself?

A: Yes, that's very important for women to do--prove to themselves that they can have a family and work. If you want it; you want your family, but you want your career, it's tough. But if that's what you want, I think you

should go after it. If your husband doesn't understand it, forget it. Forget him, "Sorry." Out the door, you know. I believe when you get married and you have your commitment and your bond--just because he has a dream, maybe that's not your dream. I believe that the man should let you go out and have your dream. The women should, too. If a man has his dream, and it's separate, let him go. That doesn't mean that you're going to part. That's going to bring your bonds stronger. But mostly, I think women should go after what they want, no matter what it is.

B: How about anything else about your life? I was thinking, when we were talking about your dad, do you think he learned those lessons about. . . It sounds like you had some good nurturing and good development, that they encouraged you to develop as a youngster. Do you think that your father got that from his family? Is that sort of like a family trait that's getting passed down?

A: No, he was close to his family, but he was always gone. He was adventurous. He was the black sheep of the family. The understanding I got--his brothers, my uncles, tell me so many crazy stories about my dad, that he was just out someplace. He'd go out and he'd, this is what I thought was really funny because I would do something like this, he'd go out and buy these cheap little batteries for \$1, and he'd sell them like they were new, for \$5. And he would just do it. Maybe that's kind of a hustler, but he kind of was. He hustled his way. Then if he got bored with that, he just left it there--forget it. He'll go on to something else. So, I think I more learned it from him. I don't think he really learned it from anybody. I think he was a lot like me, that he wanted to go out in the world. When you go out in the world, you meet a lot of people. When you meet a lot of people, you learn a lot of things. And you use what you learn.

B: Very adventuresome.

A: Yes. I don't know if the rest of his family is like that. They're go-getters. My family is, they're hustlers, but I don't think as much as my father was. I think he led the pack. They came to him for advice. "What do you think I should do about this?" "I don't know what to do." "What would you do?" So, they came to him for a lot of things.

B: What else haven't we hit on?

A: I don't know. I don't really know what you're interested in?

B: One of the things I usually ask is what is the most satisfying thing about the work that you do now?

A: Okay. That's a little rough. I think it's not the satisfying thing I do with my work. I think I'm satisfied with myself at work. I can't say that I'm satisfied because I'm doing what I want to do. I'm actually doing the same thing. I think my attitude has changed. I think that's important. If women are unhappy in their job, or if they're going into a job, and it doesn't turn out to be like they thought it would be, that they should be satisfied with themselves--try to be more happy with themselves and maybe the job would be a little easier. I haven't smiled, I would say, at my job in about two years. I have my days where I smile, everybody has their up days and down days, but by the end of the day, it just mentally could really wear you down. I think that if women aren't satisfied with what they're doing, I don't think they should just totally give up. If they've gone into that field, it's not a job they just happened to come by, that they should just give it a little bit of time. I could be happy in the work I do. It's satisfying, because I feel like I'm fixing water lines. . .

B: You accomplish something.

A: . . . and I'm helping the public, and I did it. I fixed that, and I fixed it well. Maybe I'm not satisfied with the people I work with in the job itself, but in the duties I do, and the work I do, is satisfying. We have new place go up--like in Tippecanoe, and all these new houses--and I get to go there and see the condos. That's exciting. It's just like, "Yes, I put the water line in." It's kind of a nice feeling, because you think that you are helping people. You're giving them water, and you know it was done right. You want it done right, because somebody is moving into this beautiful home. You don't want them to have a messed-up line, and all their water going all over the place. You want it done right.

B: What about looking into the future again? You're going to be out there interviewing, looking for a new job, probably, at some point along the line. Have you

thought about what it would be like to go and interview? And you've been on this job--probably, you've only ever interviewed once?

A: Yes, just a couple times. I was just thinking about that not too long ago. I was asking, they have a 96% placement at the school I'm going to, I don't understand; I talk to these people and they never get jobs. Then I talked to my friend, and she got a job from your school. I was talking to somebody and they said, "You know, it's how you present yourself in the interview." That really is important. I guess one guy went on an interview, and it was like, "Just tell me about yourself, just anything." Like I like to ski; I would tell him things like that, just to tell him about myself, whatever would come to mind. This guy was like, "Well, here. Here it is. This is what I did. I got my certificate. Do I have the job?" It was just really not, "I don't know what to tell you about myself. I'm married. I got kids, they're kids, they're okay. I like marriage." Know what I mean?

B: Yes.

A: And nobody would like that type of person to work with. Your record shows that you are a straight A student, you passed, and you've got the degree. So does everybody else. I think what the interview is about is that they want somebody that they would like to work with. If I was interviewing you, I'd try to turn things around and say, "Hey, am I going to want this girl to work with--or this guy to work with?" He's got no family, he's divorced. He tried to get married again. He doesn't care. If he goes skiing this weekend, he goes skiing. He doesn't even care about it. He's not even ready for it. He's worried about how much vacation time he's going to get from the job, so he doesn't even want to be on the job.

B: Have you thought about how you want to present yourself?

A: I don't know yet. I've never really done it, like that, where I had to sell myself. You know, selling yourself is the hardest thing. They say used car salesmen, that's a hard job, selling a car; it could sell itself by looking good. But selling yourself, I think, is one of the hardest things you really do. Number one, you've got to feel pretty good about yourself in order to sell yourself. If you don't, it comes through. People can tell, when you've got a shit attitude. You're trying to



have a good attitude. You know, I think I'm just going to go in with a good attitude, and be excited about it, be excited about the job, because this is what I want to do. It's like, "I want to get into fixing computers!" Be kind of excited about it, because this is what you want to do. It's not like, "This is a job, I want it, and it's good money. This is what I want to do. I like your office. It looks fun, and everything looks good around here." You have to open up your mind a little bit. Tell the guy about yourself. Let him know that you really enjoy doing this work, and you enjoyed going through school to get this. You want to do this kind of work, and you want to put yourself into it.

B: What about making contact? It seems like you're pretty good about that--making contact with people?

A: I'm really kind of a shy person. A lot of people don't think I am, but you get me in a crowd--like our soccer banquet, and stuff like that--I just kind of sat on the side, and looked around. And I knew everybody, because I just got done playing soccer with all these girls. I didn't talk that much. I think I can reach out to people. I like to connect with people. I think what it is, is that I like the public. If I can see somebody that I can connect with, that I'm interested in--maybe they're educated or maybe they're like the telephone company. Every time I see one of those guys, I'm so interested in the telephone system, I'm always into talking and connecting with them. Maybe I feel like I can't connect with ten people at one time, because, individually I don't know them. I can't reach every single one of them. It's the groups that scare me.

B: I was thinking about an interview, though, making that contact.

A: Well, like I said, if I'm interested and I'm going to get interviewed, and it's something I want to do, I think the contact would be there. Because, number one, unless I really don't like the guy, and really didn't like the office, I'm not going to have a bad attitude. I'm going to have a good attitude. I'm going to be nervous, but I'm going to be excited, because I'm going to finally do something that I'm going to enjoy doing. I think if you show that in an interview, it's just not like, "Well, this is a good job, and it's something until I get what I want to do." You're not even going to get that job, because it's just something you want to do. I think if I go into an interview, I don't know,

I'll probably mess it up and never get the job (laughter), that employer wants to see that. He doesn't want somebody that's not going to be at work, walking around bummed out, and just like, "Well, this field's okay. I really wanted to be an electrician." They don't want that. They want somebody that's going to say, "Hey, I'm interested in learning. Teach me some more." Robotics is so exciting and so advanced. I want to build a robot. I'll bring one in. Maybe that's what I'll do. There is this little kit, you could build this little robot. It's really cute. Maybe I'll bring it to my interview, and say, "I think this is really cute. Do you have one? I want you to have it."

No, I don't know what I'd do, because you've got to be serious. But, it's serious, but they don't want a totally serious plastic person on the job. If that's what they wanted, then they could just pick anybody. I think if they see that I'm not really plastic, but I could be business-like. You've got to be business-like, because you are dealing in a big corporation, with a lot of people. You just can't go into a company, joking, "Well, I think you need a new computer; I don't feel like fixing it." You know, a joke. I think they want somebody that's not really plastic, and somebody that they're going to hit it off with also. Maybe I'm not plastic, but maybe I wouldn't get along with somebody I went to get interviewed with. Maybe they don't like girls with dark hair, then I'm gone. It could be anything, and the chemical is not there, so there would be no way of me getting the job, no matter what I would do. But if they're going to look at what is on my resume, what I'm about, I would try to answer the questions, and tell them that I'm really excited about this field.

One of the companies I really want to work for is IBM. If they would ever call me, I would be like, "Yes, this is the company. This is my dream. This is where I want to go, because you guys have the cutest little building, you've got your own place to park your car." Really! "You train your people, and I think that's really neat, because I want to be trained more into it." I would be real excited about it, but if it was a job that was like, "Well, I don't know. This is a company I really didn't want to be with. Okay, but I'm going to go anyway." I think it shows.

B: You're just thinking of starting a new field. Now, I'm going to ask you a question that's sort of clear at the

other end. Have you ever thought about a time when you won't be working? When you will be looking at getting out of the work force? Do you ever even think about that?

A: Yes, I think a lot about retirement. Financially, I'm trying to get real set. Here, I'm twenty-five, but I'm really trying to get set financially. It scares me. Losing my father, I think people kind of think, at least I do, my mom might not be there the rest of my life. She might not be there for my retirement. Who knows what the rest of my family? I think strongly about that. I want to have my house. It doesn't have to be this \$100,000 house sitting out in Canfield, or anything. I want to be comfortable in my house. I think about--my mom has some property--I've thought about building a house there, and kind of settling there. It's way out in the country, so it can't change that much. They're not going to put a McDonald's next door to this property. I think as long as you're kind of financially set. . . I hope to keep the friends I have now. If you can find a couple true friends to go through your life with, I think that's pretty special. That's pretty hard to find. I don't know. Not working. I see my teacher now, and I'm thinking, "What if I get through with this electronics, and get a job," because that's what he did, and he just did not like his job so he walked out. He made fantastic money, had a fantastic house, and just left. It was in California or something. And just said, "I'm going to teach. I'm going to teach what it's really like out there, to work in a field like this. Maybe I would do something like that. I don't know. If I was that educated in it, and I really understood it, just because you're educated in it, you might not be able to teach somebody it. Teaching is just a totally different field but I would mind doing something like that. Retirement, I don't know. God, when I'm not working. I'd hope to travel a lot more, and like I said, reach people with what I did throughout my life. If it was my dream, and I enjoyed it, it's just like putting your dream underneath your desk. You can't do that. Just because you quit working your job. I'd probably play around with things, and try to design things--something off the wall. I don't know. Hopefully, by then, I would have somebody that I would spend the rest of my life with. I'm not out looking for anybody, but hopefully, there would be one person out there that could handle living with me, and all my odd ways of living, and just settle down with him. Hopefully, they would have partially the same dreams as

me, and travel with me. If he didn't want to travel with me, I'd just say, "Well, I do want to travel."

B: Why do you want to travel?

A: I think when you're in an office, all you see is the four walls; when you're in Ohio, all you see is the border-line. Do you know what I mean? It's like you're closed in. But you're not; it's not like I feel like I'm locked up and I've got to leave and go to California or Europe or anything. I'm happy where I'm at. It's not like I'm escaping. I want to travel because I want to see how other people live. Maybe if I get into electronics, I want to see electronics in another country. Maybe they're not as advanced, or maybe they're more advanced. I don't know, just to meet people. I'd like to go mountain climbing. That's my adventurous side. I don't know if I'd ever do that, but a lot of that stuff. I'd like to go to Colorado. I'd like to see--God put us here, and he didn't just put me here in Youngstown not to see the rest of the world. He gave me my feet, and I'm healthy--I thank God for that--and He probably wants me to go out. Maybe He put it in me to see His world, and just the natural things in the world.

So many people get up in the morning, and they never see the sunrise. It's, "The sun's coming up, I've got to go to work," but they never see the sunrise. I think God wants us to get back to that. We're kind of losing track of how beautiful the world is, because we have so much trash in it and pollution in it, and we're just breaking it apart. But there are still beautiful things. People go down to Mill Creek Park, but they don't know what it's really about, or really take a look at things. It's survived so long. It's beautiful, just sit there and take pictures, or something. Just enjoy it for what it is, and that's it. That's probably why I would want to travel. I'd want to see things--the beautiful things. My mom always wanted to go to Egypt, and I always thought, "Well, if I ever had the money, I could take her to Egypt." And I always thought, "If I had all this money, what would I do?" I'd want to buy my cousin, Karen, a mountain, she always wanted a mountain.

B: That's good.

A: Yes, and I always pictured buying all these people all these little things--their favorite things.

B: Like a mountain?

A: (Laughter) Like a mountain. I guess so. Because one day she told me she always wanted to go to the mountains, and build a cabin, or something off the wall like that, and it just stuck. I don't know if she still feels like that; that was a long time ago. She probably forgot about it.

B: You kept the dream anyway.

A: Yes, that just popped into my head. My dad always wanted to go to Italy. I can't take him there now, but he's there now anyway. That's where he wants to be.

END OF INTERVIEW