

Original Transcript of Interview with Joe Calvacca, a retired Department of Sanitation worker.

Transcribed by Lana Povitz, April 2011. Interview conducted March 28 in Queens, New York, on a street near the Kew Gardens Union Turnpike subway stop, in the front seats of Joe's car. It is a cool, crisp, early spring day, overcast and slightly damp.

Lana: My name is Lana Povitz and I'm here with Joey Calvacca, if that's the pronunciation.

Joe: Exactly.

Lana: And it is March 28 and we are in Queens, and Joey and I are going to talk today about his experiences working with the New York Department of Sanitation. So thanks again for agreeing to do this.

Joe: No problem.

Lana: So, first of all, do you want to tell me a little bit about your childhood, where you grew up?

Joe: I grew up in Queens, Ozone Park. Throughout my whole life, still part of Queens. When I was going to school, my grandfather, is a, or was a retired sanitation worker. He retired in 1955. He had told my father that the sanitation test was coming out, so before I graduated high school I had taken the test, not knowing that I wanted to be a garbage man, because I actually owned a body shop and was working at the automotive field. So really knew nothing about sanitation or anything about it, or just that they picked up garbage. As a kid, I didn't know how hard they worked or when they worked. The whole idea of sanitation... My life was geared up on automotive and fixing cars and stuff like that. So when I graduated high school, I went on to open a body shop. And, being that the freeze was on the test, the sanitation test, it was frozen for twelve years I think.

Lana: What do you mean by freeze?

Joe: There was a freeze. Meaning the mayor, at the time, froze all the city jobs. There wasn't enough money, so people that took the test, and paid the money to take the test, they didn't hire not one person off the list, so you put a freeze on it, because you're talking even that 30,000 people taken a test, now it's like 60,000 taking the test. Don't quote me but now it's like 60 bucks to take the test. So 30,000 times 60's a lot of money to the city. And I think if they don't hire one person off the list, I think they would go and rule off the mayor or something. There was a freeze, everything was on hold, which cost the economy, back in the '70s.

Lana: What year is this, about? Who was the mayor?

Joe: Ah... I'm pretty sure it was... I think it was Lindsey. Or the one before Lindsey. So the freeze was on the test, and, like I said, I took it when I was eighteen, just graduating high school.

Lana: What year were you born? Just to get...

Joe: 1954.

Lana: Great.

Joe: I'm 57 years old. So we just waited, and one day, ten years later, or whatever, after the test, or twelve years, cause I know it was held over for twelve years. [Truck sounds; Joey pauses.] They sent me a letter: report to 125 Worth Street if you want to be a Sanitation worker. And being that my grandfather was a worker, I wanted to maybe carry in his footsteps. He told me so much about the job. But when he was on, in 1955. So from '55 to when I got hired, job was totally different.

Lana: How was it different? That's so interesting.

Joe: Well it had different trucks, different equipment. For many, many years, back in the '50s, the Sanitation Department had ancient equipment. Equipment that they didn't... they had the snow equipment and all this stuff but it was all antique. They never bought new equipment for a long time. So in '55 and the '60s, all that equipment was just leftover, and they kept using it, and fixing it, using it, and not replacing it, or buying new equipment. So that's... I wanted to follow in his footsteps and become a garbage man.

Lana: What kinds of things did he tell you about it – your grandfather- that made you think you wanted to do it?

Joe: Well mainly, he said he retired – he lived to be 94 years old – and he retired in '55. He died in '92 or '93. So he lived a good life, and, you know what, he retired with a pension. It wasn't that much, like today's pension, but the main thing was his benefits. He had good benefits. And that's the reason why I was thinking of taking sanitation, for *benefits*. Not for the money. The money, I had a body shop, and I'm working and making money, good money. But benefits I couldn't buy. Benefits and health insurance was phenomenal at the time, the pay, when you could get a city job and the city pays yours benefits, the union, and if you get hurt, they're payin' for it. So that's the main thing that he told me. Forget about the money, it's the benefits. You can't benefits, and you're gonna retire with a pension. In the body shop, I'd be still workin' as an auto mechanic. There's people 35, 37 years and they still don't have a pension. So that's why I decided to be a garbage man.

Lana: Makes sense. So when was your start date?

Joe: My start date was July 28, 1985.

Lana: And what was the first kind of work you did?

Joe: When I first started sanitation, it was in '85, we had Chevy Love Trucks. And we were on sweeping. The first place that I got, my district, I was in Bronx 3, up by Yankee Stadium. We used to just sweep up and down the streets. They send you out in a Love Truck, or you would go

out with a bunch of guys and a can and you would sweep, and make piles, and later on pick them up and throw them in the can, and then a truck would pass and you would dump it in.

Lana: What's a Love Truck?

Joe: A Love Truck is like a little Chevy S10 pick-up truck. Little small pick-up truck, they're called Love Trucks. But they're little small pick-up trucks, not as big as a regular pick-up, pick-up. They're like little, little trucks. A smaller version of a pick-up truck. They were called Chevy Loves—they were S10s they were called, as the Chevy field would say. So we had trucks like that, and they would send us every morning, and you would sweep for eight hours, come back, sign out, and go home. It was boring, you know what I mean. Did I want to do that? Not really, but you know what? It was something to do, it was the summer months. Traveling Queens to the Bronx was a little bit a problem. I didn't want to travel so I put a transfer in, and actually transferred. I put—when you transfer, you're allowed three different districts to put- and I put one in Queens, Queens 9, which is at Atlantic Avenue and 130th Street, and I put Brooklyn 17, which is on [word unclear – sounds like “Forgo”] Street, and I put BK 5 as my third pick, which is about five blocks from BK 17, and that was off of Fountain Avenue. It was actually Cozine and Milford Street. The transfers came down and actually I got the third pick, Brooklyn North 5.

Lana: How long had you worked in the Bronx? How long did you do that stint?

Joe: Not even a month.

Lana: Okay.

Joe: Because what happened was... As new guys, the only time you're allowed to put a transfer in, in Sanitation, is during the time when new guys, when new people come on the job. And I just want to point out there's a Chevy Love, see that little truck? [Pointing to a car driving by.]

Lana: That white one there?

Joe: That little, little white one. See how little is?

Lana: Yeah! I've seen those before, I didn't know they were called that...

Joe: That's a Chevy Love.

Lana: Cute.

Joe: We just saw one pass us.

Lana: Thanks for showing me that.

Joe: So when new guys come on the job, that's when you're allowed to put a transfer in. So at that time they were hiring, because I came off the old list. So they were short men from an attrition of people retiring, so they hired new guys on, and that's when you put your transfers.

Whether you get it... as far as it goes towards seniority, you may and you may not. If guys transfer out of a district and it's open, you could get there. If nobody's transferring out of the district or retiring from that district, you may take ten years to get to that district. You know what I mean? So it just happened that district, a few people retired, and a lot of people transferred from there. Because when you leave training, they put you, they back-fill you into places that have the least amount of men, that need the most men. So that's why the Bronx is undesirable to a lot of people that are living in Long Island, or that lives in Staten Island, or lives in Queens and Brooklyn. So if you've got 20 guys that end up there after being in school, the first thing you do when you go in the door is you put a transfer in because you want to get close to home. So that's how I got to BK 5, Brooklyn North 5.

Lana: So what are the boundaries of that geographically?

Joe: Brooklyn North 5?

Lana: Yeah, if you know.

Joe: Brooklyn North 5 handles East New York. It borders the borderline of Queens and it goes to Van Sinderen Avenue. And it goes from Jamaica Avenue to the Southern State Parkway. Can't tell you how many miles that is, but it's a pretty big district.

Lana: And how long did you stay there?

Joe: Stayed there my whole career.

Lana: Same... same route?

Joe: No, no, not route. Same location.

Lana: Right, right.

Joe: To get a route, you need some seniority.

Lana: Oh...

Joe: And a lot of guys, like I said, when I went from that place, from Bronx when I went to Queens. I mean to Brooklyn, when I went there, I did the same thing I did in the Bronx. I swept.

Lana: Okay.

Joe: But only thing I did do is sweep at night, from midnight to eight in the morning. So... you swept... it's called MLP. And most districts have MLP, they still have it today. It's called Motor -- Litter -- Patrol. That's called MLP. And a lot of guys are on MLP. They sweep at night, because at night there's no traffic. There's less people in the street, plus we service our garbage cans --well, they're called, when I say garbage cans, they're called our litter baskets --on all the corners of the streets. People don't realize, when they wake up in the morning, they're all empty.

They don't just disappear, somebody blinks them away, they get picked up at night, on 12 to 8, so no one really sees us picking them up. Once in a while, if they're overfilled, they send trucks out on the 12 to 4 shift. But other than that they're picked up at night. If one's overflowing, the garbage guys on their garbage route will service them, because they're on their route and they want to keep their route clean.

Lana: So, that's up to them, if they pass by it...

Joe: If they pass by it and it's full, they should pick it up.

Lana: Do they?

Joe: Yes. They should. 99.9 percent they do pick it up, it's part of their job. They can't pass a litter basket that's full and not pick it up. It has to be – it's part of their job.

Lana: Now let's say there's no one on a garbage route that day.

Joe: Then it gets picked by either 4-12, or when the route is set up to be picked up.

Lana: Uh-huh. Okay. So, let's talk about seniority then, how that works. So, you started doing that, and obviously you didn't keep doing that for the rest of your time...

Joe: No. As the seniority goes, there's different jobs as far as...in Sanitation. Not only there's garbage men, there's called garage men. Garage men work inside the garage. When I say work inside the garage, they fuel trucks; they check all the oils; they check the trucks for damages; they change tires. When I say change tires, they're flats, that means. If they are low on air, they change the tires. The garbage men change the tires. The mechanics do not change tires. The only thing the mechanics do, which we have city sanitation mechanics do, is do the mechanics of the truck. They work on the motor, change mirrors, any kind of mechanical work is done by mechanics. But the garbage men do change their flats. Plus they check oils; they put ploughs on in the winter. They... if a truck breaks down in the field, we have wrecker men. That's a garage man. He goes out with a tow truck, and he tows it in. So being that I was mechanically inclined, and there's some people out there that can't pick up a hammer, or know what a hammer's distinguished from a pen... [Lana laughs.] And I'm mechanically inclined, so I put in for it. To be a garage man, to work inside and work on the... change flats and stuff, because I'm familiar with a lot of the tools. Just like an accountant, you give an accountant... some accountant's only knows pen and calculator. You know what I mean? You put him inside to change a flat, he probably can't. Most of them learn, but I've seen it already. So I put in for a garage, and it took me about two years... two, two and a half years before the guy that was senior, the guy that was in the garage retired, and I got his job. You have to remember, those jobs there, that are in the garage do go by seniority, *but*... seniority goes down the list fast, because when you pick up garbage, you get *paid* to pick up garbage. It's extra money to pick up garbage. So they're undesirable jobs, as far as being a garage man, because you could make more money picking up garbage then working in a garage. You're actually getting base pay to work in the garage, put ploughs on, be a wrecker men, there's no extra money. When you pick up garbage, you get paid extra money. So a lot of the senior men do not take it. So junior men do get stuck in the garage.

If nobody volunteers, it goes down the line, and the last guy in the totem pole, seniority-wise, has to train and he has to take it. Whether he's qualified or not, that's how it works. So I put in for it, and I got the garage. And I worked in the garage for ten years of my career.

Lana: What years, roughly, would that have been?

Joe: What's that?

Lana: Like from what year to what year... about?

Joe: Say from like '87... to '97.

Lana: Mm-hm.

Joe: Like that. Cause I was two years in and out, and then doing other jobs and filling in for people.

Lana: Okay.

Joe: And then when you work in the garage, of course you get qualified on all the equipment. You have to be because you have to be qualified on a wrecker, you have to be qualified on a front-end loader, and for someone who don't know what a front-end loader is, it's a bull-dozer. Some people call it a bulldozer, some people call it a front-end loader. Some people call it a lift-bucket. There's numerous names. But it's actually a front-end loader, where you could load stuff, construction stuff, or really not construction stuff but big, bulky stuff. The machine does it, you don't have to do it. So you get qualified on that, you get qualified on the wrecker, you get qualified on mostly every kind of equipment that's in the garage, because you have to drive it. You're a garage man.

Lana: So then, following that job, after '97, about...

Joe: So after '97, after I gained some seniority and felt that family-wise, with being married and having kids, I needed a little extra money on my table. I decided to go on garbage.

Lana: Can I stop you for a sec? When did you get married?

Joe: I got married in 1985. When I got hired for Sanitation. I hired in July and married in August.

Lana: Wow. That's... a big year.

Joe: Yeah. Big year for me.

Lana: And, kids?

Joe: Kids, two kids. Son and daughter.

Lana: In what years?

Joe: The kids I had? In '88 and '89.

Lana: Aw! They're only a year apart.

Joe: Yes, they're 16 months apart.

Lana: So, when's your son – what, you have a son and daughter?

Joe: My son is 22, my daughter's 23.

Lana: And you said your son, he's... a sanitation worker?

Joe: He's a sanitation worker right now. He works at DVO.

Lana: What's that?

Joe: DVO is Derelict Vehicle Operations. They pick up all the derelict vehicles in the city – trucks, whatever's abandoned in the street.

Lana: Mm-hm. And what's your daughter do?

Joe: My daughter just graduated college, and is a... graduated for criminal justice. She's unemployed. She's looking for a job.

Lana: Okay, so you say that, given your family commitments, you wanted to...

Joe: I wanted to make extra money, because extra money on [Joe offers Lana an Altoid mint, which she accepts. Joe is frequently having these] garbage is extra money each day. Don't hold me to the figures – I can't tell you 'cause I don't remember – I think it was, at that time, was 42\$ extra each day for picking up garbage. It might have been a little bit more, a little bit less, I don't know the exact figures.

Lana: Okay.

Joe: So I decided to go on garbage, and I did garbage, and when I first started Sanitation, recycling wasn't part of – I don't know what year it came in, but I think it came in '89 or '90 when it really became by the state and by federal government, mandated for recycling, for everybody to recycle. So I was picking up garbage for a while and then, I really wanted to do something different, so I went on paper route. To pick up just paper instead of garbage.

Lana: How is that different?

Joe: Well – picking up garbage, you go to a stop and you may take up ten cans of garbage, comparison to one bundle of paper. Or one piece of cardboard or five pieces of cardboard. It was

lighter on your back and lighter on your body, you know, to pick up recycling than picking up garbage. So I decided to do paper. The only thing different is when it rains, and people put their paper out, now you're picking up paper, a bundle of wet paper. So it averaged out, it got heavy too. But garbage, you're picking up 16, 17 tons of garbage a day.

Lana: Wow.

Joe: While paper, I was picking up four or five tons of garbage. I mean tons of paper. So it's like a third of the weight. Now it's more, because at the time, it was brand-new, and a lot of people didn't put their paper. And a lot of people didn't recycle, so it was less paper. Now they're up there. Not 17, but they're up there. Eight, nine ton of paper.

Lana: Are you big recyclers at home?

Joe: Yes. Yes I am.

Lana: So, because it's lighter on the body, is that a job more people would want?

Joe: Ah... It's hard to say. Some people that are... the older you are, you wanna do paper. If you got more seniority... a lot of the guys jumped off garbage and went to recycling because it was lighter. The only thing is the route was longer. Where a route... I can't tell you the mileage, but, where a route of garbage was 25 blocks, paper, or bottles and cans were 50 blocks. That's just a scenario, you know what I mean, just to give you an idea of the distance. So you know, it took you longer to do the other route than your garbage route.

Lana: Sure. So what kinds of things would you find... in the garbage? There's this talk about mingo, and how sometimes people would take –sanitation workers would find good things, off the record...

Joe: Well...

Lana: Or gross things...

Joe: Well, I'll give you an example. Rumor had it, that in our district, many, many years ago, that one of the guys –first of all, people, when they put out their garbage, put anything out. Everything and anything, whether it's in their attic, its in their basement, its in their garage. They could be cleaning around, people drop stuff off. Now a lot of people have garage sales to get rid of their junk, but back then they didn't get –they just through it out. Or someone passes away, a family member, they have their mother, their father, they don't realize what they did have in their house. They just want to empty the house, so they just put it out for garbage. Furniture, you name it, it gets thrown out. Garden stuff, whether its worth anything, its hard to say. You know what I'm saying? Another man's junk is another man's treasures. So. Rumor had it that in our district, in East New York, that Louis Armstrong lived up in Highland Park. There's called the Highland Park there, which is very, very exclusive. One of the guys, somebody had found a trumpet with the case and the trumpet. And it had his initials...

Lana: Wow.

Joe: ...on the trumpet and the case. Now, whether it was actually Louis Armstrong's, we can't say. Nobody could tell you, because they were just carved in there. Could have been somebody with them initials, yes. So we don't really know, but the rumor had it that it was Louis Armstrong's trumpet, one of his trumpets. So, you know, we can only say the initials match his name, its his, but we didn't know if it was his. You know what I mean? Could have been a guy with a different name, Larry Something, or, you know... We don't know. Do people find a lot of stuff? Yeah. You find a lot of stuff, that's mingo, you know. Are you allowed to take it? Not really. It's actually owned by the city, and the city owns it and has the right to throw it away. But some guys, some stuff you find is not bad. People throwing it out.

Lana: Did you ever come across anything really gross?

Joe: Gross? Uh...

Lana: I read someone found a dog. Like a decomposing dog.

Joe: Yeah I did. A matter of fact, we had to pick up a horse.

Lana: Really.

Joe: Yeah because there's a horse farm in BK 5, and we had to pick up a horse that died. So. We had to pick up that, we picked up chickens.

Lana: From where?

Joe: People had chickens, it was a lot of farms in Brooklyn North 5 that were many, many years ago.

Lana: Really!

Joe: Yes. So, people's chickens, all kinds of stuff. I never picked up anything, but people did pick up bodies, they said.

Lana: Really!

Joe: Yes...

Lana: What do you do with that?

Joe: Well they call the police, first thing, if something falls out. I know a few years ago, not in our district, some of the garbage guys found a baby infant in a black bag, and they called 9-11. That's many, many years ago. Not in our district, but uh... [Lana makes shocked sound.] You find a lot of stuff. Guns... Guys found guns, guys found guns thrown out.

Lana: You also call the police for that?

Joe: You call the police immediately. You call your foreman and then he calls the police. You don't touch it. You turn it over. You find drugs, there's drugs, people throw drugs away. They throw, you know, everything. There's a lot of stuff going on that you find.

Lana: Does it fall out of the bag?

Joe: Yeah. When the back of the truck crushes –in the hopper – some of the stuff falls down, and when it cycles, it falls down. If it's a gun, it's heavy, it may fall out of the bag or something. Or when it squeezes it, if you see something bloody, you really open it to check.

Lana: Whoa... Okay. So, what was that area of East New York like in the time you worked there?

Joe: Uh... well... East New York, at one time, was predominantly like Italian, Irish, German. When I got there, I would say it was just changing, where it was definitely very mixed culture. African-American, Spanish, little bit of... you know, a little bit of everything. It was changing, the neighborhood, and, you know.

Lana: Would you say it was rich, poor, middle-class, what kind of...?

Joe: I would say some of it was middle-class and some of it was very poor.

Lana: As time went on, did it get more poor?

Joe: Yes. It got more poor, where houses were boarded up, and a lot of drugs on the streets. As of, I hear, now, they're building new homes there. They're trying to bring it back to middle-class living, and bring back the neighborhood. Like they do with all the neighborhoods. Like the Bronx, and all the other neighborhoods. They're trying to revamp it and bring back the middle class and hopefully the neighborhoods will change.

Lana: So, how – was there a way that you could see this reflected in the garbage that you would collect? Like could you see the neighborhood changing on your route?

Joe: [As fire truck sirens go off in the background.] Well, garbage is garbage. You know what? Whether it's middle class, or it's poor, everybody eats the same stuff, everybody barbecues on 4th of July, so it's heavier [Lana laughs], everybody has parties. So whether it's middle class or poor, it's the same amount of garbage. It don't change. Garbage is garbage. Everybody celebrates holidays, Christmas, New Year's. I didn't see any change. Garbage is garbage.

Lana: What would you say your favorite part of the job was?

Joe: The favorite part of the job... the favorite part of the job to me was meeting a lot, a lot of new friends. And still, today, being friends with them, getting together with them, having good times, having parties. People invited for christenings and graduations and communions. Meeting

a whole different class of people inside of Sanitation, and being friends with them, and doing a lot of other things with new friends.

Lana: What do you mean by different class?

Joe: Well, when I say 'class,' you know... Sanitation men. Like the cops, they have their unity in their department, as far as [ironically, more sirens run in the background; Joe pauses for a moment as the sound subsides]... Maybe 'class' was a bad name. What I mean is, the people as garbage men people... like NYPD people, like Fire Department people. I know firemen, they all meet, their wives meet, they have parties. We became of that with sanitation, where we all became friends and we got to know each other and we hung out together. We had parties. That's what I mean. When I say 'class,' I mean, we wouldn't mingle with NYPD guys, you know what I mean? If we were at a party and it was firemen and NYPD, we would stick with our own people.

Lana: Would there be a party like that, where it would be all kinds of city workers?

Joe: Uh... Only at parades.

Lana: Ah.

Joe: At the parades, there's different... You know, all the different things. If we threw a party it was all Sanitation. If the PD threw a party... Once in a while, the mayor threw some different parties where everyone was invited. We were Sanitation, Fire, and Police were invited. Maybe that was the wrong word to use, 'class.' It should have been 'people people,' or whatever.

Lana: Mm-hm. [Pause] Are these folks you still hang out with?

Joe: Yes. Til today, I hang out with them. I still keep in touch with everybody, we [can't make out word] families, kids meet, so everybody became one big family, Sanitation family.

Lana: Mm-hm. And what does your wife do?

Joe: My wife is a bookkeeper.

Lana: Oh.

Joe: Yes.

Lana: Does she – so when you hang out with Sanitation people, is she friends with them as well? Is it separate?

Joe: No, my wife is actually friends with their wives. That's one thing I have to say about Sanitation, the wives –I mean, we're not singled out, like just the guys hanging out, or whatever. When we get together, and we have parties, like a Christmas party, the wives are invited, the kids, the family... It's family-oriented, you know what I mean? Plus, there's different groups,

organizations, inside of Sanitation. When I say ‘organizations,’ there’s the Emerald Society, there’s the Pulaski Society...

Lana: That’s Polish?

Joe: That’s Polish, correct. And Emerald Society, is, you know what...

Lana: Irish... [laughs]

Joe: Irish, there you go. And then there’s the Columbian Society, that’s Italian. And there’s the African-American Society, and all these societies—

Lana: Does that have a name?

Joe: What, the African-American? It’s the African-American, I think, Society. There’s the women have a society, since they’re on the job. So every ethnic group has their own little society that we belong to. Mostly everybody belongs to every one. Like I belong to the Pulaski, I belong to the Emerald, the Holy Name, the African-American one, because I was on the job. Because they’re my friends. I’ve been to most of the meetings. I’ve been to the Pulaski meeting, I’ve been to the Emerald meeting, and actually I was the Columbian Organization... I was on that board, the board of trustees for the Columbian Organization.

Lana: For how long?

Joe: About six, seven years? But I was on... in the organization all my life, in my career on the job, for over twenty years.

Lana: When you retire, do you stay with them, or no?

Joe: Yeah, you could go to the meetings.

Lana: Do you ever go?

Joe: I used to. I stopped going because I lived all the way out in Suffolk County, and the meetings are in Queens. But as far as they have dinner dances, they have weekends... Yes, I do go. The dinner dance’s is on Good Friday, it’s coming up. They have golf outings. I was very involved with the Columbian Organization. Raised a lot of money for the Columbian Organization.

Lana: How would you raise money? What kinds of things?

Joe: We had fundraisers, different... Dinner dances, golf outings, different things. Raffles, and stuff like that. I was very involved with the Columbian. Also, I helped out in the Pulaskis and I helped out in the Emerald, because they’re my friends.

Lana: Right.

Joe: When it comes to being a Sanitation worker, there's no ethnic, there's no black, white, Hispanic. There's no Irish, Italian, Catholic, German, Jewish... We're all friends. We're people, and I think a lot of the people on the job stick together because of that. You know what I mean? There's no boundaries as far as being, so, you know... 'You're excluded cause you're Jewish' or 'You're excluded because you're Italian,' or whatever. Everybody meets and has fun, and everybody enjoys themselves. And we enjoy each other. So that's one thing as far as the job. Everybody sticks together, you know, 99 percent of the people all stick together. You have a few people that... they're not... racist... or anything about the job. It's just that they keep to themselves. There's some people that sign in and just go home and don't want to mingle. They're not people-people. They're not full-out forward or upfront.

Lana: Right.

Joe: It's got nothing to do with any kind of animosity or anything towards the job or towards people. It's just that, you know, some people just got second jobs, and they run home, and they got kids. So they can't really hang out, or be a part of these organizations or friends. I mean, they're your friend on the job. You break bread with them; you have lunch with them; you have coffee with them. You'll do... They'll do anything for you, but when it's time to sign out, they go home, and that's it. You don't see 'em anymore. So that's one thing about the job that I enjoy, is because the people are just phenomenal. Phenomenal, phenomenal people. They're people-people. Nobody's snobby. Everybody loves one another, you know what I mean? It was a great job, I have no regrets. If I hadda do it again, I would do it a hundred times over. I always say, and my wife will tell you, at any party, or anywhere, 'Sanitation put bread on my table, and friends in my pocket.'

Lana: Is there a particular thing that you wish more people knew about the Department of Sanitation? Like if you could tell people in New York a few things, what would they be?

Joe: Number One what I would say?

Lana: Yeah.

Joe: And I have to say from my heart, because I honestly think, at 9/11, we got a raw deal. Not only 9/11, a lot of other things we do. I'll give you an example. When we do the Rockaway Parade, for St. Patty's Day, the people there just come out and want to bring you sandwiches and sodas, and they clap for us. Even the St. Patty's Day Parade in the city, or the Columbus Day Parade, the people know of us when they see us. But behind the scenes, they don't know what we go through, each day in our life. As far 9/11, I was down at 9/11, I spent many a night in the MTS – when I say MTS, is where the garbage, you load garbage onto barges – and it was called Hamilton Avenue. And the barges come and that's where the garbage got dumped into, and it got shipped to Staten Island landfill, so they could sift through it. Not only it got sift through with us; we had FBI; we had CIA. I was in a front-end loader, and I would just spread out the garbage and people would sift through it. And dump trucks, and tractor-trailers would dump loads and loads and loads of tons of debris from 9/11. And a lot of our guys were at 9/11. I can't give you the scenario as far as – I don't know if anyone passed away, from the sawdust, not from the

sawdust, from the fumes and all this other stuff that they said it was there – but there are sometimes I can't breathe. I been checked, and I'm okay, but you don't know what will go long-term, for a lot of our guys. And when you hear, and believe me, I feel for the people, and their relatives, and their wives, and the husbands of people that got lost at 9/11. The firefighters, the cops, the Port Authority. Yes. I feel for them. It's just that they're mentioned, and nothing is mentioned with Sanitation. Nothing. That *we* were there – *we* cleaned it up. *We* got pictures, we carted it away, we had our there on 4-12 the day the towers crashed. We were there hours, right after that, just like everybody else. And our guys really didn't get the... not that we're *lookin'* for it, but... didn't get what everybody else got. As far as, uh... Sanitation was there, and we thank them, everybody else was thanked, the list, and that's what I feel Sanitation gets the raw deal. Because, just like the snow. We clean up the snow since Day One, since God put snow on the ground, we've been cleaning it up. And we have one bad season, 2010, and everybody gets on the bandwagon, and guys are sleeping in the truck, they're saying, we're at Dunkin' Donuts, we're not doing the job, our blocks are not ploughed. And this and that. And they really don't know what went on behind the scenes. What about the other 190 years that we cleaned the snow for the people? And there was never a problem. What happened? What went wrong? You know what I mean? Yeah, maybe there was a –a, a wrong call on how many men should have been sent the day after Christmas, or what truck should have been sent out. Everybody's holding our guys hostage. Guys are at Dunkin' Donuts nine hours, they're smashing cars. They don't know the scenario. They're not garbage men, they're not cleaning the snow. But all the rest of the years, there was no complaints. Whether it was the biggest snow storm, '96. There was a big snow storm in 1996. 2006, another big snow storm, that we were in. And one day, two days, everybody was snowed out, and everybody was on the road, so everything is good. This time, it just happened, something happened. Will they revamp it? Yeah. Whatever -- they'll lookup what went wrong, we'll fix it. But it isn't our fault. It isn't the guy that's out there 12, 13 hours a day driving a plough down the street. Is it their fault? No. They're working. They --why wouldn't they work? They say people don't want to work, or whatever. That's not true. You're getting overtime. Why don't you want to put bread on your table? Why would you put only chicken when I could put a steak on because I got snow on the ground? Alright? Or I could take my wife out to dinner because I'm making, you know, money. Overtime. It's overtime. So that's what I would say to the public, know what I mean? Be thankful that our guys went out there and did the job they did. And not only that, they picked up the garbage after that! Yeah, it stayed out there. The news showed piles and piles of snow, of garbage! We couldn't get to it! It was snowed in! It was covered with snow! So we're bad? We're wrong? You know what I mean? It only affects when things happen. Like the Police Department, if they shoot somebody with 40 bullets, they're all wrong, and this and that. But meanwhile, they go out there and they save lives every day. They protect us. Same thing with the Fire Department. The minute they do something wrong, everybody's against them. I mean, they shouldn't pick on any department in the city. Because we're public servants, and we do the best job we could, whether, of any department. Whether it's the Fire Department, the Police Department, or the Sanitation Department, we do a good job. They do a good job. The Fire Department does a great job. Everybody does a great job, but the minute somebody does -one guy, or two guys, they do something wrong, they hold everybody accountable, and it's not fair. And it hurts a lot of guys on the job. You know what I mean? Myself too. It hurts me, to hear that. I'm sitting home, retired, and I hear that Sanitation did the wrong job, the guys did the wrong job. And it hurts me to be a garbage man, that they would think that of us. Because everybody goes out there every day, and... they did a poll on garbage

guys, okay. The most dangerous job, in this city, is a garbage man. And you could look it up. We have the most dangerous job of every job in the city. As far as a cop, a fireman --and I could break it down a little bit for you-- a fireman? Yes, his job is... terrible, dangerous, going into flames, smoky building. When does he do it? When a fire is there. If there's no fires, he ain't in the building. If there's a fire, yes, he's in the building. Is there one every day? Is there one every hour? No. Is there one a week? I can't give you that scenario, because some places, there's no fires. They go to car crashes because they're in a nice neighborhood or something. A cop? If he's in a Queens neighborhood, is there gun shooting? Is there drugs? No. Is his life on the line? Yes it is, but less then if he was in East New York, or in the Bronx. He's not against shooting. So his day is writing parking tickets, or going to accidents, or people who have heart attacks. But the garbage man, he's up at 4:30 in the morning, on his route at 6:00 in the morning, every day, six days a week, all year round. Winter, sleet, snow, rain, hail, any kind of --whether it's minus ten, minus twenty, whether it's sleety, ice on the ground, snow 40 feet tall, mountains 10 feet tall, he's out there, contending with garbage. Okay? Is it dangerous? Yes! Do you know what people put in garbage? No! They put anything. I already got stuck by a needle, stuck to the side of my leg.

Lana: You did? Wow.

Joe: I was on garbage, and threw a bag in, and the next thing I know, there's a hypodermic needle sticking into my leg. Do you get scared? *Yes*, I was scared. Went to the hospital. They did nothing for me. Couldn't do nothing for me. Couldn't tell me if it was an AIDS needle, or it's this needle or that --'You'll be alright.' And they sent me home. [Lana makes shocked noise.] 'Til today, I get checked for AIDS, I get checked for hepatitis, alright. Is it dangerous my job? Yeah. Guys get cut on glass, they get cut on cans. Getting hurt, right, on garbage, is a lot. You're bending your back, and this and that. Is our job dangerous? Yes. Is it the most dangerous? In my book, yes it is. I'm not saying the cops are not -- I'm not saying the Fire Department. If you take a guy and he's maybe in the Bronx and he goes to a fire every day, yeah, his job is more dangerous. But we're out there 24/7, picking up, contending with whatever. Contending with rain, sleet, snow. We're out there. So, do I feel hurt? Yes I do. Know what I mean? Do I feel glad I'm a garbage man? I feel great being a garbage man. That's what I feel about the public.

Lana: Thanks for that answer. It's good to hear all this stuff. Do you -- is there something that, ah, you wish you had known? Something you know now, that going into it would have changed things for you? Or put differently, what kind of knowledge would you want to pass on to new workers?

Joe: Knowledge. Knowledge I would pass on to new workers is 'Pay attention. Do your job. Get in on time. And just keep your eyes open. Watch your environment, watch what's around you. Because in an instant you could get killed, you could get run over, you could get crushed. You need to pay attention, listen to your bosses, and most: be a union man. Our union is one of the best in the city, maybe the best in the country. They're great guys. They back you. They help you. I have good friends there. And I'm not saying that because my friends are all there, but the union is great. They do wonders for the job. They help the job, they watch us. And you should be a union Teamster. That's what you should do. If you're a Sanitation worker, make sure you're a Teamster, and you're part of the union.' That's what I have to say for the new guys coming on.

Lana: Now is there a way I get to see those pictures?

Joe: Pictures of my truck? I got plenty.

Lana: You brought 'em? I'd love to see 'em.

Joe: Yeah, yeah, I'll show you. [Lifts an album from back seat.]

Lana: I'd love to see them.

Joe: I'll show you. A scrapbook.

Lana: Oh wow! Sweet.

Joe: I'll put the glasses on, cause I gotta see. [Lana laughs.] I think the first page is...

Lana: Wow! This is the paper.

Joe: Yeah, right in. May 1995.

Lana: [Reading] 'Trying to change looks of a white sanitation truck.' Okay.

Joe: As you see, my truck is a regular garbage truck, but I wined up being on paper. So I put, being that East New York is predominantly Spanish, and they really don't know, you know, they didn't know which—I mean, listen, I wouldn't know, and if I had a garbage truck coming down the block, I wouldn't know which truck is the paper truck or which one is the recycling truck, let's put it that way, or which was the garbage truck, cause there's a white garbage truck.

Lana: Sure.

Joe: So I changed my truck to suit the Spanish in the district, but putting it in Spanish.

Lana: Okay.

Joe: And it says 'Papel only.' Means paper only.

Lana: Ah... I see.

Joe: So I put that on my truck, so they would know. Because ah, some people would come out with their garbage, they're running late to go to work, and this and that, and they would just fling their garbage in the back of my truck. And once that happens, it contaminates your garbage. Your paper load, or your recycling load. It contaminates... You gotta go back to the garage and put, you know, clean it out, and wash out the thing. And then of course, I then changed, and I put big, blue signs on the side of my truck. 'New York City Recycling Program,' 'Paper Only,' 'Save Our Trees.' You know. And of course you see in '95, I had a little bit more hair than I

have today. [Lana laughs.] That's when the truck starts. Them signs come off, and they went on every day.

Lana: Cute. And you just thought of those cause...

Joe: Yeah, I just thought of it and wanted to do it. Change, change the system, you know. But being – you have to remember- the city can't, I shouldn't say can't – the city cannot have trucks like that, because my truck –they really, again, I have to say, the city treated me good. My truck, they made me keep it, and I was the only one who drove it. And they made it only a recycling truck. But there's other trucks that have recycling that pick up recycling today. Maybe tomorrow another truck breaks down, they have to use that truck for garbage.

Lana: How come you were an exception?

Joe: Ah... Well, I was a good worker, and I treated my truck with the ut-- respect. I kept it clean...

Lana: It looks very clean.

Joe: So, they gave me the right, if they... my foreman and management gave me the right to keep the truck and only put it on paper. They tried with their utmost, by not using it on garbage. Of course, later on, I put some added-on stuff. I added hubcaps...

Lana: I see that.

Joe: And I put...

Lana: That's cute: 'Business is picking up.'

Joe: 'Business is picking up.' I put different sayings on it.

Lana: 'Recycle today for a better future tomorrow.' Do you believe that?

Joe: Yeah.

Lana: You do?

Joe: Yeah. I mean, it saves our trees, glass, the other stuff. They recycle trees now... This is a letter that came from... ah... which one here? Oh yeah. Doin' what I did to my truck got really... publicity around New York, and East New York. And someone had called New York 1 News. And I actually came down to the garage and they did a segment that aired on New York News for about six minutes about my truck, how clean it was. The narrator and the news reporter, Messina, actually ate a hamburger out of the back of my truck.

Lana: I heard about that.

Joe: To show how clean it was. Messina eats a quarter-pounder off the fender of my truck, from McDonald's. We're in front of McDonald's. I have it all videoed.

Lana: That's so funny. That must have been good publicity for your department, for sure.

Joe: Oh yeah, it was excellent. This is all the things I did later on. I saved enough money so that I could put chrome on it and make it a really sharp, outstanding truck in the Department. I mean, if you look at... I don't know if you're familiar with the city. If you're in the city, you see the private trucks.

Lana: Yeah.

Joe: And the private trucks, their drivers, being that they were the only driver, that it was only their truck... they would, how do I say it... 'Pimp My Ride,' or something like that? [Lana laughs.] You know what I mean? I see that on tv, where they go out with all chrome, and do different things, and have stereo. I had stereo in my trunk. I had a radio with stereo speakers.

Lana: This is at your expense, you paid for this?

Joe: Right, this is all out of my expense. Our department gave me the authorization to do it, you know what I mean, and later on they did help me do a few extra things to my truck that came from their expense. So... it just got out of hand, I think. A little crazy and out of hand. The guys in the garage and everything, they thought I was crazy. My wife thought I was nuts, too. But we got a lot of publicity, we was on a lot of shows. The truck was on New York 1 News, it was on David Letterman. It was on Day and Date. So we got a lot of publicity for the Department. It's been at all the parades. And...

Lana: [Pointing at a photo.] David Letterman show right here.

Joe: Yeah, David Letterman show. I think that's his film crew at the David Letterman Show. So.

Lana: Uh-huh.

Joe: There we're setting up, we were there all day, they filmed. So, you know, it was a good experience.

Lana: Sounds fun.

Joe: It was fun. You know. Did a lot of different things.

Lana: When was this – this was '95?

Joe: Yeah.

Lana: I see from there.

Joe: 1995. So, just different details...

Lana: Ah!

Joe: Here we are, there's my son, of course, you see. He's a little guy, he's about ten.

Lana: Cutie.

Joe: This was at the Plaza Hotel where I met Robin Nagle, a wonderful person. And you see Sanitation Worker of the Year Award.

Lana: Yeah!

Joe: Actually everyone thought I got it because my truck was there, and I got more publicity than the people inside, photographs, of course. Here's John Doherty, he's still Commissioner 'til today.

Lana: Oh, hold on. So you didn't -I feel like Robin told me that you had gotten Sanitation... of the Year Award.

Joe: I got it after that.

Lana: Oh that was something separate.

Joe: Yes, yes.

Lana: Uh-huh.

Joe: I got that after that. So.

Lana: When did you get that?

Joe: Uh... It was about two years, two years after that, or something like that.

Lana: That's quite a distinction, no? I mean there are a lot of sanitation workers.

Joe: Yeah, yeah, it is pretty good. It was okay. You know, I mean, it was just par for the course. I had been on... Like I said, I was on Day and Date, I was on David Letterman, so being Sanitation.. I mean, it was something impressive, but not as impressive as being on the news, watching yourself.

Lana: [Laughing] Yeah.

Joe: Not --watching Ira Joe Fisher put his makeup on in my hubcap. [Lana laughing.] That was more impressive to me than getting this award. [Looking through photos] I mean there was, if you look... That's my whole family.

Lana: Yeah! That's your wife, your daughter, your son in the car... Oh, that's cute, see he's already there.

Joe: He's actually driving... This was the equipment that was at the thing. We had different old equipment. There's the old escalator truck, that's in the '50s. So.

Lana: When did your son know he wanted to do Sanitation?

Joe: Well. My son really didn't want to do Sanitation.

Lana: Oh, is that so.

Joe: Well. When I say he didn't want to do it... He didn't know about it. Because, if you see, he's only ten years old there. He knew his dad had a truck, and he used to drive it and sit behind the wheel and make believe he drove it. And he came to all the parades for me, he had a ball. But did he know in high school that he was gonna? No. Fast story. My son was 15, 14 years old and the Sanitation Test came out.

Lana: Mm-hm.

Joe: Okay. There is no age limit to take the test for Sanitation. Meaning, you could be... 15, 16, 14, 13, to take the test. As long as you pay the money. You pay 60 bucks, you could take the test. You can't be hired, back then, 'til your eighteenth birthday. Now, [looking at picture] these are the actors and actresses from Day and Date, they signed, 'To Joey.' You can't be hired 'til your eighteenth birthday. So, your eighteenth birthday, you have a CDL. Now they changed it - Here, there's Ira Joe Fisher -excuse me for uh- this is Day and Date. The girl kicked the field goal over my truck.

Lana: Oh, yeah.

Joe: So. Uh.

Lana: What happened with that again? Robin mentioned this story to me to, I think.

Joe: They called me because they wanted a field goal. So they put my truck, they put litter baskets on the top, and a New Jersey place kicker, a girl, she's about 16, 50-year field goal over my truck.

Lana: What kind of show is this?

Joe: It was called Day and Date. It was like a morning show, stuff like that.

Lana: Yeah yeah, okay.

Joe: But what happened -here's New York University, Robin...

Lana: Oh yeah...

Joe: --So anyway, she kicked a field goal over my truck, which was impressive. She did it twice. But more impressive, nobody believed that that truck actually was a garbage truck that the City of New York used. So Ira Joe Fisher actually did a segment on me, because the truck was there. And of course, [looking at another picture] here is the St. Patty's Day Parade.

Lana: Oh yes, I can see.

Joe: We put four leaf clovers on it.

Lana: Yeah. Cute.

Joe: So my son took the test when he was 14. I dragged him, paid the 60 bucks, and I said, he's coming to take a test. A sanitation test. He's 14. I think he was in middle school at the time. Not even in high school.

Lana: Mm-hm.

Joe: If you look here, there's a lot of top-brass... [looking at another picture]. Here's Miss New York of USA. She was at the thing with my son, see how small he is? This is the Columbian Parade. The Columbus Day Parade. Here's Anthony Seminerio, the Congress, uh... that was in Queens? So to make a long story short, I dragged him to the school to take the test. When I got there, to take the test, they --sorry, to say about the picture, this is the cardinal blessing my truck. We passed at St. Patrick's, and he blessed it.

Lana: [Laughing] Amazing.

Joe: When I took him -- I don't know if there are any more [pictures]. There's just a few that are just... So, the people who run the test would not let my son in the door.

Lana: Because he was so young?

Joe: Well not because he so young. They thought I was taking the test, and they had to babysit my son. So they wouldn't let him in. But I'm telling the guy, I'm saying, 'Excuse me, but I'm not taking thee test.' 'Well what are you doing here?' 'My son's taking the test.' 'No, he ain't allowed.' 'Uh, yes he is. Here's the card to prove he's taking the test. Here's his number, his everything. He's taking his test.' He said, 'Well, you're not allowed in the room.' I said, 'No I'm not going in the room. Just, can you just, I'll have somebody.. whatever room he's in, can you have somebody ... Maybe he could have somebody so he don't get lost.' I'm going to wait in my car. Of course, I waited in my car, and my son took the test, and out of 60,000 people that took that test, his list number was 938. He was one of the first classes to be called, at 14, to be on Sanitation.

Lana: Wow.

Joe: So I had to write a letter and take him, not off the list, just, on the bottom down until he turned 18. And of course every time they hired, every time the hirement was, and it was for four years, they hired my son. Come down to 125. I had to write a new letter: he's not of age, he's in high school. From middle school, they called him at 15, they called him at 16. I wrote about nine letters 'til he was 18. They finally called him on his 18th birthday to come down. And he was graduating high school. He actually was starting college, Suffolk Community College, and I said, 'Do you want to take the job?' And he said, 'I'll try it.' So we had to get him a permit, and you need a CDL.

Lana: What's that –CDL?

Joe: CDL is a license –a commercial driver's license to drive a truck. So you need a CDL. You have to take the permit, but they called him when he was 17 and three-quarters, his birthday's in October, tell him to report. He had to report September 20th. So he wasn't 18. And we couldn't take the permit test until you're 18. So there was a little bit of a dilemma, but motor vehicle let him take the test, and if he passed, not –how would I say? It wouldn't be validated 'til his 18th birthday. So on his 18th birthday he got it validated, he got on the job. He's one of the youngest sanitation workers ever hired on the job. He turned 18 on the job. He turned 18, he was hired. On his birthday.

Lana: Why did he take –what was the point of taking the test when he was 14? To see if he could?

Joe: Well he was going to college, and Dad and Mom gave him a little bit... twenty year retirement, you're 18, you're 38, you retire with a pension, you got benefits, you could open a business, be a lawyer, be a doctor. Go back to school. He was trying to go to Community – Suffolk Community College with going to the garbage, but of course he went one semester, and once the snow hit, he's the junior man, he had to work around the clock. And the Dean of Suffolk Community College says, 'You gotta pull him out. He can't be absent.' I tried to explain to him – it's impossible, can he go nights? Or make up the classes? And they would not have anything to do – you miss three or four days of school, you're out of school.

Lana: I just meant, when he was 14, why did he take the test?

Joe: I forced him to take it.

Lana: Just cause you wanted to see if he could.

Joe: Well I told him, 'Take the test! What have you got to lose?' When you turn 18, it's four more years, the test will be out, you'll take it again.

Lana: And he had already –

Joe: And just to get involved, to see what a city job test is. He could have been anything – a cop, a fireman. Just the object of taking the test. And he didn't study. And he went in there, and I have

to say, he's a test-taker. He loves taking tests. He takes test, and he passed. Like I said, he got, out of 60,000, he's list number 900. So.

Lana: That's impressive.

Joe: That's very impressive. So he's on the job, he just –October – he'll be five years.

Lana: [Looking at a picture.] Is that Giuliani?

Joe: Yes that is.

Lana: Wow.

Joe: That's Giuliani. We're with Giuliani. Here he is again, at the parade. With my son.

Lana: Oh yeah. Wow. What's your son's name?

Joe: Joe. Same as mine. [Looking at another picture,] I think that's all the class members? Is that Robin?

Lana: This looks like something Robin would do, yeah.

Joe: That's Robin. All the course members. That's Robin. All the class members. They were nice. All the students were excellent. Everybody was excellent there.

Lana: I heard it was a really good talk.

Joe: Oh I had a great talk. You see I could just talk. I just carry on.

Lana: Well –where are we at? We're good for time. I really appreciate you bringing this in. It's a big book and there's a lot of stuff in here.

Joe: Yeah –a lot of memories. Everything, and then of course, you saw that. And this was probably one of the last pictures we took. Which [pulling out a larger picture] was actually – that's a blow up of the Columbus Day Parade.

Lana: Oh yeah.

Joe: This one is recent – just before I retired. That's what it all – you know, Joey's toy, got my daughter and son's name on it, this is when it was really looking really sharp, with air horns. A lot of the trucks don't have air horns. I mean now they've got air conditions in their trucks. But all this here chrome, I put on.

Lana: That's lovely. Nice effect. Where's that truck now?

Joe: Honestly? I can't tell you. I think they retired it and it got sold.

Lana: Ah.

Joe: Towards attrition and new equipment they need, they sell them after so many years. I mean they kept it around as long as possible, but I think they sold it. So. I think actually Canada bought it. So I don't know where in Canada.

Lana: I'll keep an eye out for it next time I'm in Montreal.

Joe: Yeah you never know, you might see it. Any more questions you have?

Lana: Well I think that's good for now!

Joe: You sure? I have a little bit more time if you want.

Lana: Umm... I mean I covered the things on my list. Is there any kind of thing you feel like talking about?

Joe: Just, as far as the recycling, we went over... I'm just trying to think. The job? The job is excellent. I mean, I... any kid today should think about taking a city job, whatever that may be. You know what I mean? There's so many jobs in the Sanitation Department. Not just picking up garbage. It's a lot of jobs. There's office jobs, there's mechanical broom, I drove that for a while, that's the sweepers that sweep the streets. I did that for a couple of months. There's different jobs in the Department. It's not only picking up garbage. You could be a clerk inside the office and never see the street. We have one clerk, he's there 25 years, never saw the street. If you don't need the money, and... you know. He does his office work. And then you move up. And become a foreman, you become a super, an assistant super, ABS it's called, you become a chief. And the money is... you know, is good. Foreman's are making 90, 100,000. Sanitation workers are making 85, 90,000. Bosses are making 150,000, 125,000.

Lana: That's a tidy amount.

Joe: It's a nice amount. You retire with half of that after twenty years, half pay. It's a great job. I probably would have stayed on another five years if I didn't get hurt on the job, but recently...

Lana: You hurt your leg?

Joe: In 2005, I got hurt, during a snowstorm. I was working in a garage and a bunch of tires just fell and they crushed me, crushed my knee. So I had to retire, was forced to retire. And that's it. But I would have still been on the job. I still keep in touch with all guys on the job, they're my friends. I mean, I haven't been going to any parties or anything, you know, but I probably will eventually. Go to different parties again. And keep in touch. Believe me, I've met hundreds and hundreds of friends and guys and bosses. I mean, I could probably walk in 125 Worth Street if a lot of the bosses are still there. I know John Doherty's there, he'd probably hug me, you know what I mean? He's a great guy. And all the bosses that I know... a lot of them retired but a lot of them are still there. And I probably could walk in any department where they are and they would

never forget me. They'd hug me and kiss me and whatever. So do I regret it? I love Sanitation. I wouldn't think of it 25, 35 years ago when I first took the test. I mean, who knew? You're a kid, you were in high school, just like my son. You don't know. But the same thing with my son. He made good friends. Matter of fact, Saturday, they went out, couples, a few bosses from the job went out as friends. They met in Staten Island, they went for dinner with their wives and his friends. I mean, he's starting a career. He's meeting friends too. It's a great job. That's what I could say about it. I don't think anything wrong about it. Some people, you might get different reviews, as far as guys that... Some guys just take up space in the job. Took the test, passed it, and really don't want to work. But if you want to work, and you want to get up every morning, and you want to show up for work, it's a great job. Some guys just are lazy. Don't want to show up. And they make it bad for – like they say, 'One bad apple in the basket ruins all the other ones'? I mean, there's a few. You know what I mean? Most of the guys – a lot of the guys are on the money, and are great guys, and come to work. But there's one or two guys, or maybe hundreds, who just, rig the system. They don't come in, or they come in late, don't want to work, lazy. Every job, you got lazy people. So that's about it. Any other questions you have? Or anything?

Lana: Well I think that's great. No. Thank you so much.

Joe: Any time, any time. You know what I mean? I could keep talking, like Robin said, I could talk three hours in one day.

Lana: That's great.

Joe: But there's a lot of other aspects, as far as the job, that you really can get into. Which I taught them, with the different paperwork and all this other stuff. With garbage, and dumps, and where you dump and how to dump the truck. There's relay men. Just men that dump our trucks. That's their job. They come in on 4-12 or midnight to 8 and they bring the trucks to the dump. Some guys dump on shift. The garbage men pick up the garbage, 17 tons, and they go to the garbage. And they go to the MTS, or they go to where they dump it and they dump the truck. And they empty out all the garbage and they empty the garage.

Lana: What's the MTS again?

Joe: Ah, the MTS is where the barges, they dump into barges and the barges get shipped to wherever they're shipping it. They used to ship it to Staten Island... so they're dumping it in the MTS. Don't hold me to it, it's Municipal Transfers Station? Something? It's just a place where they transfer the garbage from one place to another to get rid of it. So that's about it. The job, to me, is fine. A lot of people, a few got hurt, or killed, it's scary. It's scary. You're out there -- try to walk in icy conditions, rainy, sleetin', sleet, snowy, icy conditions and you're walking with work boots. You really need spikes. That's what you really need, but you can't have spikes, you're in concrete, you're on the pavement. And then also some people are just inconsiderate. They wanna go around you, they blow the horn.

Lana: Oh yeah.

Joe: And a few people ride the sidewalk and hit all the garbage cans and knock 'em. Want me to close that window?

Lana: Oh yeah, I guess I'm getting a bit cold.

Joe: Alright, alright, there we go. [Rolls up the window.]

Lana: The sun was so strong before.

Joe: Yeah, yeah. So, I mean, that's about it. If you have any questions, you could always call me and let me know.

Lana: Alright.

Joe: Hopefully, you probably could put a good report together.

Lana: Oh yeah! It'll be fun to transcribe, I've gotta type it all out. Let's see, where are we at? We have an hour and twenty, that's solid. I'll shut it off for now.

- FINIS -