

DSNY ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVE

Narrator: Gloria Coletti (GC)

Interviewer: Lexie Russo (LR)

By phone

April 29, 2021

LR [00:00:00] Hi, Gloria.

GC [00:00:01] Hi, Lexie.

LR [00:00:04] Hi. So I'm here with Mrs. Gloria Coletti. This is Lexie Russo calling from Brooklyn, New York. Gloria, would you mind introducing yourself?

GC [00:00:14] Hi, my name is Gloria Coletti.

LR [00:00:17] Excellent. All right, so let's get started. So Gloria, when did you start working for the department and in what capacity?

GC [00:00:26] Okay, I started April 29, 1985, as a clerical associate.

LR [00:00:34] And where was that?

GC [00:00:36] That was at the Fresh Kills Landfill. On Staten Island.

LR [00:00:47] Okay, excellent. So what drew you to the department?

GC [00:00:53] Actually, I had, the year before, I took the test. You know—they were giving a test—because I had had a miscarriage, so I was kind of in depression. So I saw they were giving a test. I said, "Let me go take the test, get out of the house." And I got called as soon as the list was put out. So I said, "Being as it's on Staten Island—" because they offered me different positions, different places. But, this was right on Staten Island. And I have three sons. So I said, "I'll go to work here. That's not bad." It's like it was like 25 minutes from my house. That was it. And that's what made me take it.

LR [00:01:38] Yeah, yeah, I think that makes a lot of sense. I am really interested in how women navigate having a home and family and work and all of those different commitments.

GC [00:01:48] Yeah, luckily the hours were eight to four. So I was home to put my kids on the bus to go to school. Because I would not go to work—my youngest son was in kindergarten at the time, so that's what made me—[it so] that I could go. And I got out of work at four, but they got out of school at a quarter to three. So I would have their grandmother pick them up from the bus. And as soon as I got home from work, I would pick them up from there. So it was only, like, not even an hour difference between when I got off work and when I picked them up, and then took them home and started dinner, made them do their homework, you know, the whole bit.

LR [00:02:32] Yeah, yeah, and I know that—well, I know from Robin at least—that when Fresh Kills was open, it wasn't a particularly loved place by Staten Islanders. [crosstalk] So what was it like for you as a local?

GC [00:02:46] Well, first of all, I was like 25 minutes away. But I will be honest with you. The neighborhood hated them because of the odor that came from it, because of the garbage being brought in. And my first week there, my husband drove me to work. And as I'm driving in and I smell that, I'm like, "Oh, I'm not keeping this job." And within a week, I wasn't smelling it anymore because it became part of your life. Like, you know, you knew what it was going to smell like, and it just dissipated. You didn't feel it anymore. But I will say how I feel about it. The people around there who complained about the landfill knew, and were well aware, the landfill has been there since the 1940s. They knew it was there when they bought their houses. When they bought their houses, if they felt that strongly, they should not have moved there. That's how I feel.

LR [00:03:46] Yeah. Yeah, that makes sense. So then, when did you get your first promotion and where [crosstalk]—

GC [00:03:53] I got my first promotion—uh, I'm trying to think—they gave the test—ooh, I think it was in 1989. Around there. I wasn't on the job too long, and I did very well on the tests. I was number three on the list. And they called me down before because they had offered to give it to me provisionally, and I turned it down. I said, "No, I want it where," you know, "I earned it." And they gave the test. I did very well. And that's how I got promoted. And after that, they did offer me many times to leave the landfill, to come to the city, I would have kept moving up, but I chose to stay—like you asked before, [because of] me and my boys. Because they were growing up, too, and I didn't want to leave them. If they had a school play, I took lunch at eight thirty in the morning and went to the schools to see the play and then went right back to work. So I didn't miss anything while they were growing up.

LR [00:05:04] So can you tell me a little bit more about the testing procedures because I know a little bit for uniformed employees how that works, but I'm less familiar with the civilian arm of the department.

GC [00:05:16] The civilians are—they put out a thing. They're going to give a test [on] this date. It's given citywide. It's given in all kinds of schools. There's proctors there. And however you score on the test, they list you on a list. They put you on a list. Just like with the sanitation workers, you're put on a list with a number. And when your number gets called, that's when you get the job. You get called for the job. It's not one in three or anything. They go through each one. And if they call your number, you get called down for an interview. They give you a physical. You have to pass a physical, a background check, and all of that. And they do it all in one day. You don't know what you're walking into. You think you're just going for an interview, but they send you from there to the clinic for your physical. Then, they bring you back. They take a picture. They say, "Congratulations. You got the job, and here's your start date."

LR [00:06:21] It's a pretty lengthy process it sounds [unclear]—

GC [00:06:24] Actually, not—if you do well on the test, it's not [laughs]. Put it that way. If you do well on the test—like, when the list hit, I got called.

LR [00:06:34] Right.

GC [00:06:35] So I did very well. But if, like, I knew somebody who was on the list—here, let me explain. If you don't come off a civil service list, you're what's called a provisional.

And that means that they gave you the job, and when the test comes out, you have to take the test to become civil service. So when I went to work at the landfill—because people didn't want to work there, like you said before, with the smell and everything—everybody there was a provisional. So I ended up having more seniority than everybody there, even though I was brand new, because I was civil service.

LR [00:07:21] Right, okay. Yeah that—

GC [00:07:23] So I got my picks for vacation, for Christmas, you know, like that. When you are a provisional—which they did offer to promote me provisionally before, I told you, and I turned it down. When you are a provisional and the test comes up for your job, you must take that test, and you must pass. And two of the people who was working there when I was there were provisionals. They took the same tests. They were very low on the list, but at least they became civil service when they got called.

LR [00:08:01] Alright that makes sense. Thank you.

GC [00:08:02] But it's not a lengthy— to me, it's a lengthy process if you don't do well on the tests. Because you've got to pray they hit your number.

LR [00:08:12] Right. Right. Well, so you did well on the test. And, so that's also how you're promoted then is taking more tests—

GC [00:08:19] Right. You've got to take another test. You could get promoted provisionally, but when the test comes out, you have to take it.

LR [00:08:29] Right [crosstalk]

GC [00:08:30] Well, you know, there's all kinds of little scams with city workers. I'm being honest with you. And some people who were provisionals and didn't pass the test, they gave them a new title [laughter]. You know, so they stayed on the job. But, no, I don't believe in that. I believe in—if you want something in life, earn it.

LR [00:08:52] Right. Yeah. So what was—when you then got promoted that first time—

GC [00:08:56] Yes.

LR [00:08:57] —what was your title then? And, so it's still at Fresh Kills because you wanted to stay there—

GC [00:09:01] My civil service title was—oh God—principal administrative associate [PAA], which meant I was in charge of the clerical workers. But I actually was still working in the chief's office. I always worked in the chiefs' offices. I was there a month when they pulled me, yanked me, and stuck me in the chief's office. And they gave me the title of executive assistant to the director. That was not a title—that was [not] a civil service title. That was my title on the job. Even though my civil service title was legit, they changed it.

LR [00:09:43] Okay, did you then have two titles—in a way, where—

GC [00:09:47] Yeah, because my civil service title was PAA. That's what I was called, you know, on my check, on everything, in my background. But my office title was executive assistant to the director.

LR [00:10:00] Okay, and how long were you in that role?

GC [00:10:05] From 1987 until I retired.

LR [00:10:10] And what year was that? You said it was 11 years [ago]?

GC [00:10:12] No, actually 1986, the year after I started. Because they put me in the chief's office a month after I started. At the end of the year, I ended up— I had something bad happen to me. I needed a little surgery. So when I came back, I wasn't back in the chief's office for the first three months. No one was in there. And then they yanked me back in, and then I stayed there from 1987 till I retired.

LR [00:10:41] And what year did you retire?

GC [00:10:43] 2010.

LR [00:10:45] 2010. Okay, great. And you mentioned that, you know, when you first took the job, you thought you weren't gonna last partly because—

GC [00:10:54] Yeah, I said, "I can't stand this smell."

[Laughter]

LR [00:10:59] At what point—I mean, how did you know? You know, how did you come to stay? What made you—

GC [00:11:05] Well, what happened was— first of all, when I went in, I like anything that's a challenge. And I was learning new things there. So once I got involved with doing that, you start being aware of your surroundings. You started really getting into the work you were doing and what was going on. And then they sent me for classes. I actually have a landfill engineering degree [laughs]. And you will laugh when I tell you. When I went to the class, one of the chiefs was in the class with me—because a lot of them didn't have one. You need that to run a landfill—and the chief asked me the answer to the question. I said, "I don't cheat, and I'm not going to help you cheat." [Laughs] So one day, the DEC [Department of Environmental Conservation]—that runs the state, you know, the greenery and all that and overlooks the landfill—showed up. And they said, "Who has the landfill engineering degree here?" Because if you don't have one on-site, a person who has one, they could shut you down. And the chief started laughing. He said, "Believe or not—her." And he pointed at me. So I had to show them, and we were allowed to keep going.

LR [00:12:31] So [crosstalk]—

GC [00:12:32] I thought that was very cute.

[Laughter]

LR [00:12:36] Yeah, so where were those classes, and what was that process and—

GC [00:12:40] The classes were held in Manhattan at some college. I honestly don't remember. It was so long ago. I know it was like in 1988 that I went. And I did very well. I've still got the degree somewhere here. I don't know where. And I did very well. And they said, "Make sure you bring it to work with you, because if someone ever comes and there's no one else there with it—" Someone always has to be on the job—someone always has to be in possession of that certificate. So I stuck it in my drawer.

LR [00:13:16] How long was that process of getting that degree?

GC [00:13:21] The classes took, I would say, close to three months. We didn't go every single day. We went like three days a week. And we—it was me. This is comical. I was still a clerical associate. It was me and all chiefs in the class.

LR [00:13:45] Oh, wow.

GC [00:13:46] Because they had called the chief at Fresh Kills and said, "Do you have somebody who could go to this class that you think will pass?" And they sent me.

LR [00:13:57] And I assume that everybody else in that room was a man?

GC [00:14:01] Yes, I was the only woman in the class. All men—well, back then—all the chiefs were men. All of them. And it was me. And I really thought it was comical. This one man—unfortunately, God rest his soul, he passed—but he turned around, he said, "Gloria, what's the answer to number four?" I said, "I'm not helping you."

[Laughter]

GC [00:14:27] "What? Are you kidding me?" You know, I was making like twenty-five thousand dollars a year. He's making like a hundred and fifty, and he's asking me for answers. No! [Laughter].

GC [00:14:42] So I did—I forgot all about that. Oh my God, that's funny. But I was the only one who went from the landfill.

LR [00:14:50] Hmm. That's interesting. So everyone else [in the class] would have been working at other parts in the department or at other locations—

GC [00:15:04] Yeah. Most of them worked in the main office in the city.

LR [00:15:09] Okay.

GC [00:15:11] You know, well, you had the head of waste disposal there. You had a deputy commissioner there. That's what I'm saying. It was a lot of chiefs.

LR [00:15:20] Yeah.

GC [00:15:21] —but not assigned to Fresh Kills. And I was assigned to Fresh Kills. But the chief we had at Fresh Kills then—he told me. He was honest. He says, "Gloria, I know if I

go, I won't do well on the test." He said, "So they asked me to send somebody. I'm sending you." He said, "Would you be willing to go?" I said, "To get out of here? Yeah."

[Laughter]

GC [00:15:47] You know, it's like a change for the day.

LR [00:15:51] And it was three days a week? Is that what you said?

GC [00:15:53] It was like three days a week. I would say about five hours [a day]. And then they gave a test at the very end. [It] might have been more like a month and a half. I don't think it was three months. It was a little bit shorter than that because they covered—they showed you films and read you things and you had to answer all these questions—that you had been watching for these hours. You know, "How many inches of dirt do you have to have between layers on the landfill?" You know, stuff like that. That's what it was.

LR [00:16:31] Okay—and so can I ask you then—what your day-to-day routine was or life was like? Tell me about a typical day for you on the job as an executive assistant to the director?

GC [00:16:45] Okay, be prepared. A typical day started—I got there early. I always got to work early. A typical day—I would walk in. There was pile of stuff on my desk. Paperwork from the boss. I did all their letters, their correspondence. I answered all violations from [the] DEC and the state. I answered violations listed from [the State of New] Jersey. Jersey was suing us for garbage floating through the water, going over to Jersey. I was in charge of all the sick calendars for every individual there. I was in charge of making sure all their evaluations [were] filled out on a quarterly basis and signed and everything [was] written down; and keeping track of who was heading for trouble; what was wrong; if someone was sick; when they had to be interviewed—you know, stuff like that. And before you knew it, the day was over. Plus, answering the phones because people would call, "Gloria what happened with this? How come we only got two boats instead of three? What's going on out there?" I was the contact person for the digger. That's what we called it. That's where they dug the barges. Back then, they didn't have cell phones or anything like that. They would call through the switchboard, connect to me, and say, "We have a broken tag line, so we're going to be down for a while." And I said, "Well, you better be back up in twenty-five minutes because I know how long it takes to fix one." You know—I was that person. So if they tried lying—and there was a lot of supervisors who used to get very angry at me because I knew exactly how long it could take—for any breakdown—how long it should take to fix it. And I would know if they were just dropping a boat because they were mad, and they had little work action going on. I would know it instantly. And I would report it.

LR [00:18:54] So who did you work closely with and in what capacity?

GC [00:19:00] Oh, the chief, the director of Fresh Kills, every day. That's where I worked. I worked in that office. In that office in the beginning—until they started lowering down the staff—I had a word processor working for me and a clerical associate, besides me, reporting to the chief. We were very, very close. We worked very closely. And I also spoke to OCR, which is operations control, every day. I was the one—I forgot that—I was the one who reported when a boat went under; when it went out; how much was in it; the tonnage, you know. I kept what was called indicators. And I would fill out a form every month. It listed the

numbers going down and going across, and they had to match. How much tonnage came out, how much went across, you know, for the whole month, each day. I'm forgetting all the stuff I really frickin' did, you know, I was underpaid [laughs].

LR [00:20:09] Yeah, it sounds like your job included a lot of different components.

GC [00:20:14] I'll tell you something actually comical. And this boss [has] also passed away since then. But one day he came to work, and he said, "Gloria,"—because DEC had written three violations against us, and I wrote the answers. I wrote the whole thing in his name. I never put my name on the papers. It was always in the boss's name. And I put them on his desk in his inbox for him to sign, and he ripped them in half and put them in the outbox. So when I went in to pick them up, I go, "What's this?" And he said, "I decided from now on—you're doing everything in this office—I'm the boss. I'll answer everything." So I said, "Okay." And I walked out. I continued doing all my other work, and I got a phone call from the waste disposal's head office, and they said, "Gloria, who wrote the answers to the violations?" And I said, "Joe did." He was the boss. And they said, "Put him on the phone." And then they told him, "Put her back on the phone." And I got on the phone. They said, "He is never to touch paperwork again. We had a rip his answers up. If he would have sent them in, we would have been closed down. Tell him to mind his own friggin' business. We already did." [Laughter] So that was it. But I thought that was comical because I knew how to answer them. I knew what they were looking for.

LR [00:21:59] Right, Right. It's not totally intuitive.

GC [00:22:02] Most of the bosses that came in said, "You know what? Everything's running pretty good in here. I don't want to know nothing. Go ahead. Keep doing what you're doing."

LR [00:22:13] So then there were three of you plus the chief in that office?

GC [00:22:20] Well, actually, it was a trailer. And-

LR [00:22:23] Okay.

GC [00:22:23] Well, first we started in the building. It was just me and the chief in the office. That was a nightmare because that guy—we didn't have computers back then, so everything had to be typed. I was a very good typist, but every once in a while, you're going to make an error. And I would go back with the White-Out thing on the typewriter. White out the letter. He would hold it up to the light. And if he saw I backspaced and used White-Out over a letter, he ripped it in half and said, "Retype it. This time with no mistakes." So yes, it was a nightmare. Here I was at one desk. He was at the other desk, shining his diamond ring while I'm over there typing, trying to make sure that I don't hit the wrong key.

LR [00:23:17] High pressure.

GC [00:23:19] Yes, it was a nightmare. It was a nightmare. Because he really didn't even talk either. And I did tell him—I will say this much for him—I told him—because I also did all the managerial time sheets because they're different than [those of] the people who work there. And when you get promoted, you fill out a vested form and you transfer all their time to that. Now, when you get promoted, if you're a chief, what you want to do is use up your comp [compensatory] time, because that's paid at your old pay rate whereas everything else

gets paid at your new rate. So I told him— [unclear] when you get promoted—say you got twenty years on the job. You get three days for each year that you worked. It's broken down. You get a day for four months, a day for four months. So when I saw his vested paper, he told me, "Go over it." And I went over it, and I said, "You're missing time here. Whoever filled this form out cheated you out of a day." And he called the city, and I got a call back from the person in charge of filling that out—she still works there, so I'm not mentioning her name—and she started screaming at me that "Who did I think I was going over her work? I was wrong. Her work was right. And don't ever do that again." I said, "I only did what my boss asked me to do." I said, "If that's what you think it is, no problem, I won't touch it." Well, he retired, and when he retired, he came to me and said, "Gloria, thank you for what you did. I was missing a day. They found it when they were redoing my paperwork before I retired. So you were right all along." I said, "Thank you. At least someone came back and told me." There's nothing wrong with making mistakes. Everybody does. There is something wrong if you make a mistake and you can't say, "I made a mistake, let me go back and do it again." That's how I feel.

LR [00:25:30] Yeah, yeah. Well, so then it was three people, right? So after you moved out from [crosstalk]

GC [00:25:38] Yeah, but then one girl went to the city. She decided she was going to go to the city. And the other girl, the word processor, retired. And they never replaced them. They just left me with everything.

LR [00:25:56] For how long?

GC [00:25:58] Till I retired.

LR [00:26:00] So what year did they both or around about—

GC [00:26:03] Oh gosh, I'm trying to think—Diane left, I would say, about 1994, '95. Somewhere around there. And little Elaine—that's what I called her because she was only like four foot five—she retired in, I believe, 1996.

LR [00:26:27] Okay. Wow. That's a good fifteen years or so with just you.

GC [00:26:30] Yes.

LR [00:26:31] Yeah.

GC [00:26:32] But it was okay because as the time was going on, as it was coming closer, people were leaving and not being replaced. So it was okay because when they left I was losing some sick calendars. I was losing some evaluations of the people that I had to write letters for because I didn't just do them for my boss. Sometimes the supervisors would come and ask me, "Gloria, could you do me a favor, help me out with this, help me out with that?" So it was okay because I had the time now.

LR [00:27:10] So—that makes sense. What was your favorite part of that job?

GC [00:27:16] I would say the people. My favorite part was the people because we were like a family. It wasn't like we went to work, and this is my boss, and this is the sanitation worker,

and this is the super's clerk, and—they knew me. I knew them. We knew about each other's families. We knew each other's kids. Everybody knew everybody there. And it was very close knit. It's not like that anywhere in Sanitation anymore. And I think it's because of all the changes that took place in the city. It was a very close-knit group of people. There wasn't one person there that I didn't know. And—when you were asking what I did—one of the first things I did when I went out there, I used to have to type up the board, which was a list on the front and the back of every single worker and where they were working that day. And it had to be ready by the afternoon for the next day. And I met somebody—actually, this is comical—last week at my grandson's baseball game. The man found out I used to work for Sanitation, and he goes, "Well, my father worked there years ago." And he said it was a real long Italian name, all these things in it. He said, "You wouldn't know." I said, "Yes, I would." I said, "I could spell it for you. I used to type it every day." [Laughter] And he was so surprised. He goes, "I don't believe it. Nobody could spell that." I said, "When you type it every day, you can spell it."

LR [00:28:51] Wow. So you had to type up everyone for— [crosstalk]

GC [00:28:55] Every single person, where they were. [As] a matter of fact, the form that I typed up—which I forgot to tell you—was called the WC 50. What happened was—and I told you there were no computers back then—so they used to have a list—and it was ridiculous, trying to find out where people were, what they were doing. So this man, he wasn't a chief yet. He was a superintendent. He came to me, and he said, "Gloria, do you think if I gave you an outline of something, you could make up a form for me?" And I said, "What is it?" He goes, "I'd like to make a form: the front, plant one; the back, plant two. And list everybody—where they're working, and how they're working." And I made the form. And I said, "What do you want it called?" He goes, "Well, I'm 50 years old, and my initials are W.C., so call it the WC 50." And everybody—you ask anybody who was in Fresh Kills in them years, they'll say, "I remember the WC 50"—the chiefs—because everyone had one in their pocket. It was listed—it had the boss's name on top, the superintendent, and the supervisor who was at digger one, the supervisor at digger two, all the sanitation workers involved, tractor operators—which digger they were at—the oilers, the water service workers. Everybody was listed on there, including the clerical [staff]—everybody.

LR [00:30:34] Okay, so I'm going to ask you one final question before we move on to talking a bit more about September 11th. So what do you wish other people understood about your work or that of the department?

GC [00:30:51] I wish they would realize, and I will tell you what I said to a graduating class at a ceremony after 9/11, that Sanitation, the workers, really do care and everybody ignores them. I wish they would be recognized more. The only time they're recognized is when they miss a pick up on the street or as soon as it snows. Other than that, people don't realize Sanitation even exists. It's just a white truck that's going past. There's not people in it. And they're people, and they have families. And everybody just ignores them. Everybody. They don't get the credit they deserve.

LR [00:31:52] All right. Okay. So as you know— this will be related to our next discussion—but as the twentieth anniversary of the attacks approaches, we're really interested in collecting these stories from that era— and about your role and the role of Sanitation in the aftermath of this tragedy. So I know Fresh Kills was in a process of transition in the months prior to 9/11 and that it closed in March.

GC [00:32:20] Yeah, we were closing down. Yeah, we were closing.

LR [00:32:25] What was your work like in that period prior to 9/11? In those months before or around the closing?

GC [00:32:32] Well, at that time, I was still doing a lot of the work I was doing. We had a land clean team that would go out every day, so I would monitor them. Because the transfer station had opened up, so I was doing all their stuff, too—the personnel, where they were assigned. Mostly, the sick calendars, the evaluations, if someone was being put in for—not a promotion—they would have civilian worker of the quarter, sanitation worker of the quarter—I would type up those papers. I would type up promotion papers for men who were going to become chiefs and put in notices for people who were getting promoted. You know—what kind of worker they were. Stuff like that. That's what I was doing.

LR [00:33:29] So did your role change with the closing or with—

GC [00:33:35] My role had actually changed a little before the closing. And this has nothing to do with Sanitation, but it did, in a way, because like I told you before, we were very close knit. I have a son. And in 1998, he had a very severe car accident, and he almost died.

LR [00:33:59] Wow.

GC [00:34:00] And they stood behind me. They changed my work hours. He was on I.V. medication every four hours. So I was able to work six to two; two to ten. You know, they did whatever they had to do so I could be there. Because he had forty-three surgeries. So I could be there for him, too. And they were wonderful. They were wonderful. So this is still going on with him when 9/11 happened.

LR [00:34:33] Yeah, okay. Wow. Yeah. It was a hard time in a lot of ways.

GC [00:34:44] A very hard time

LR [00:34:46] Yeah. Okay, so your role has changed around the accident and you're accommodating your son's health—

GC [00:34:54] And I'm still doing my job.

LR [00:34:57] Yeah, yeah. That sounds like—[crosstalk]

GC [00:34:59] I did—immediately after the accident, I took all of 1999's vacation and used it so I could stay home and take care of him. Because they wanted to put him in a nursing home, and I was not having that. So I used up all my time, and Sanitation came and knocked on my door one day. I couldn't believe it. They handed me an envelope. Everybody gave money, so I could get whatever he needed. But the nicest thing they did was changing my hours, so I could be there for his surgeries—which led to 9/11.

LR [00:35:45] Yeah, tell me more about that.

GC [00:35:49] Okay, Scott—that's his name. That's my son's name—was scheduled for surgery on 9/11 at NYU [New York University] in Manhattan. So we drove up. It was a big surgery, but we were coming near the end of big surgeries. And it was a beautiful day. I still remember. It was a voting day, and I was thinking, 'I'll get home in time to vote.' And we went to the hospital. And they gave him a shot—because he hadn't eaten or drinken from the night before—to relax him. And then the doctor came in and said, "I don't know how to tell you this, but all surgeries are canceled today. There was an accident down by the Twin Towers. So we have to send everybody home." So I said, "Okay." Because I really—I had no idea. So I got in the car, and my son at this time couldn't walk at all. And we drove down the East Side Drive, and I was joking all along. I said, "Scott, look at this. This is like that commercial Bob's Road. This is Gloria's road like there's no cars out here." He goes, "Ma something's up."

GC [00:37:08] And when we got downtown, they kicked us off the East Side Drive. And I went by the Brooklyn Bridge. I said, "I'll sit here until it opens." Brooklyn or Manhattan—I don't even remember which bridge. That's how confused—it was Brooklyn. And a cop screamed at me and told me to get the hell out of there. And as we're sitting there, there's people walking past our car. I can't tell you how many people. So many people. And she said, "You're not getting over this bridge today. Get the"— She cursed and told me to get the F out of there. And I said, "Okay." And I said—in my thinking still not knowing—I said, "Scott, we'll cut over to the West Side, and we'll go through the tunnel to Jersey. And with that, I look up, and I see fighter jets flying over Manhattan. And I'm like, "What the hell is this? A movie?" And we made a turn, and there was the tower. It was still standing. It looked like women's fishnet stockings. And I lost it. I started screaming. I curse like worse than any sailor ever when I'm upset. And the car started shaking, and Scott said, "Ma, you've got to get out of here. You've got to drive. I can't drive." And I made a turn. And when I made a turn, the car really started shaking. And I go, "Now my car is breaking down." And he said, "No, it's not. The tower just fell." So I park my car on Canal Street, and I just started crying. I said, "We're going to die in the car. After going through all this, we're going to die in our car in New York." There was no one else on the street. There was just people walking away with that white stuff all over them. It was all over our car. And this poor kid hadn't eaten or drinken from the night before. So I turned on the air condition, and the white shit hit us in the face, so I shut it off right away.

GC [00:39:23] And he goes, "Ma, I need water." So I got out of my car. And I walked, and I found a guy. He was selling warm water—warm—but I didn't care. I bought the water from him. And I saw a phone, a payphone. And I stood on line with all these other people. And I called my husband and he goes, "Gloria, where the hell are you? We've been trying—Everybody's looking for you. Where's Scott?" And I said, "He's in the car." He said, "Take him to a hotel." I said, "We listened to the radio. There's no hotel rooms left. So we're just going to sit in the car until we can get out of here." And he goes, "I saw on TV what happened." And I went nuts, Lexie. I went nuts. I said, "You have no fucking idea what happened. Don't tell me you saw what happened. We're still here." And I just lost it.

GC [00:40:21] And I went back to the car. I gave Scott the water, and we sat there for quite a few hours. We sat there. He had a cell phone that wasn't working. We finally—late that afternoon, we made up to 14th Street, and we saw a pizzeria that was open. So I said, "I'll get you a pizza and a soda." And I went inside, and I got the stuff; I came out. Neither one of us could eat. It was that upsetting that day. So he drank the soda, but his phone rang. And it was my oldest son who happens to be in the United States Navy. He was an officer in the Navy.

And he said, "I saw everything. I've been following you all day long." Because he was assigned to Bay Street, so he saw the planes hit the towers. He said, "I'm going to keep you informed when there's a way out of there." Because there was no way out of New York. And then he said, "They opened up one lane on the Queensboro Bridge. I'm gonna guide mommy up there so you can get out of there." And, I'm like, "I don't even know where the Queensboro Bridge is." So he did guide us there. And we got across, and we came down the drive in Brooklyn, and we looked across. Everything was still burning.

GC [00:41:46] We made it home at ten thirty that night. It was, like, unbelievable. But, I couldn't sleep. So I said, "Might as well go to work the next day." And I think this is what your professor might have been thinking of—I went to work the next day. I got there [at] about a quarter to six because I didn't sleep all night. And a guy walked over, and I'm thinking, "Wow, the guard is out of the booth. This is really unusual." And he rapped on my window. I had the roll down windows, and when I rolled it down, he put a shotgun to my head. And he said, "Photo ID." I said, "Listen, mister, if you knew what I've been through in the last twenty-four hours." Here [unclear] I went again. And he said, "I don't care. Show me Sanitation ID." So I gave him my driver's license because, like I said, I started there in 1985. Do you know what I look like in that picture? A kid. He said, "No, this is not good enough. I want the Sanitation ID." So I pulled it out, and I showed it to him. And he said, "What are you doing here so early?" I said, "I work six to two." And he said, "Who's your boss?" Dennis Diggins was the director of Fresh Kills at the time. I said, "Dennis Diggins." He asked me where the office was. He asked me all these questions. When I answered, he let me in. What had happened was they asked for a list of the people who worked in Sanitation—what hours do they come in? But they forgot to tell them that one person worked six to two. So when he turned around, the back of his jacket said "FBI." That's when I realized, I'm like, "What the hell is going on here now?" And I drove in, and I called my husband. And my husband really thought that I was going to end up in a mental institution. Because he goes, "I know what you went through yesterday, but they're not blowing up the dump, Gloria." And right then, going past my window, I see the wagon with parts of the World Trade Center on it. And I'm like, "Oh my God. It's here. It's here." It was like something, Lexie, I couldn't get away from. It was there. And I was so shocked. But that's when that started now doing all that. So that's how I spent 9/11. Oh my God.

LR [00:44:26] I mean and—

GC [00:44:26] Yeah, that was it.

LR [00:44:28] Yeah, so you would have been at the NYU Hospital in Manhattan, I imagine, incredibly early, right? Because they always—

GC [00:44:35] Yes, his surgery was scheduled for eight o'clock in the morning.

LR [00:44:41] Okay.

GC [00:44:42] And by the time they gave him this shot and all this stuff went on and they threw us out, when we got downtown, that tower came down. And the doctor, the following week—because I had to go back the 18th. Scott had kept that bracelet from the hospital that day. By the time we went back, the doctor said, "If something like that ever happens again, I'm not asking people to leave. I'll keep them here." He said, "I waited all day. No one came."

LR [00:45:18] Hmm. Wow.

GC [00:45:22] And all I was worried about was I had to sign for body parts that morning. And I'm like, "What happens to the body parts now?" [Laughs.] "Where are they?" This is the stupid things that go through your head?

LR [00:45:38] What do you mean you the—

GC [00:45:40] He needed body parts from a cadaver to rebuild his leg.

LR [00:45:45] Right, okay.

GC [00:45:47] And I signed for them. They had them. I signed for them. And Dr. Lamont told me the following week: They were kept in the freezer. So they were still good.

LR [00:45:57] Okay, so he was ultimately, Scott, was able to go back that next week to get the surgery done?

GC [00:46:03] Well, actually, I had to call my son John, the one in the Navy, because he had a government car. And it gets worse. That Friday, I got a phone call. I told you my son is a nurse, my middle son. He was working in Saint Vincent's, and he was working too many hours. He has epilepsy. And they called me and asked me if it was Michael's mother, and I said, "Yes." And they said, "Well, we need to let you know. He went into a seizure. It's been going on for three hours. We're sending him up to NYU because we don't know what to do for him." And this is when I got home— was a note—a thing on my machine: "Bring Scott back early Monday morning because he's going to be operated on that day." The operation that was canceled.

GC [00:46:57] Michael was up at NYU in the epilepsy unit. Scotty was now. John drove us up there, dropped me off. Scotty was in the other side of the hospital. So I had two kids there, and I'm feeling sorry for myself. And the next—I called in to Mike Mucci and told him, "I'm not coming to work." And he said, "Why not?" I hadn't gotten sick—it had to be over eight years. I said, "I can't explain it." And he said, "When will you be back?" I said, "I honestly don't know." And I went up the next day by public transportation, after he was operated on. And as we were going up, we were going up First Avenue, on the [M]15 bus, and I saw all the pictures of all the people who were gone. And I said, "How dare you feel sorry for yourself. You know where your kids are. Even if they're not okay, you know where they are. These people don't know where their kids are, and they might never know." And it made me really put everything into perspective. You know, I was going to see my kids. These kids were never coming home. So it actually helped me seeing those pictures. I cried when I saw them, but it helped me. And then after a few days, I went back to work and that's when— oh, my God—then, I was in charge of the cars and all the equipment that was, you know, the fire trucks, all of that stuff. That was my job.

LR [00:48:43] Oh, wow. Yeah, so let's—yeah, it'd be great to talk about that some. What your job—how it [your job] changed and what it looked like after 9/11. And, you know, what's a typical day? You know, you're dealing with all of this. So however you want to go about telling me—

GC [00:49:01] Well, when I would go in the morning—well, it went on for quite a while. It wasn't like a two-month thing or three— it went on for quite a while. We didn't have days off or anything anymore. We were working a lot of hours. I was in charge of all the cars. And when I tell you, there were a lot of cars destroyed, and fire trucks, and ambulances, and cop cars—yes. Again, with Sanitation, I will tell you, Sanitation cleared the road to get people in there so they could start digging and looking. They were never acknowledged. Sanitation came up with the plan to open up the landfill. We knew we had the equipment and everything they needed to get this thing going and start going through things. They called the day before and let them know. They were never acknowledged. Never. And that I feel very bad about because it's a sin. They made the calls and said, "Listen, we have everything you need. All you got to do, give us the okay. We're ready. We're ready for you. We'll have everything ready." The first shipment from the towers arrived, like, I think it was one thirty in the morning or something. So you know, Sanitation did what they had to do, but they were never acknowledged for it.

GC [00:50:32] I was told to work with a government insurance agent that was there. He was the head guy for all of the cars and stuff, and we worked hand in hand. And every week, I had to go up on the Hill, which was a horror. And we would go through and make sure all our paperwork matched. I got a lot of very bad phone calls from people. They wanted their cars back. They didn't understand they weren't getting their cars back. If I told you what was on some of them cars, you would throw up. But they were like—we were holding back. We were keeping cars, you know? No, they were all destroyed. All of them. And not from us. They were destroyed, and we sent them to a metal factory and plant in Jersey to destroy them permanently. But that was my job.

GC [00:51:29] And then, families started coming there looking for an answer. "Where was their son?" And they would bring them to my office, so I got to know them. And a lot of times—I gave them my home phone number. They would call, "Gloria, you going to be at work tomorrow." Because you feel that connection. You understand. You know what? I don't know how I would react if something happened to one of my children, and I had nowhere to go and nothing to show. I also knew—the logical side of me knew that when those explosions happened, the people who they never found and never got nothing back from, they disintegrated. They went up in the air. They went straight to heaven. But I could never say that to these mothers. So I would just talk to them and grieve with them and hold their hands. And I did what I could do. And that went on. After we were done with the 9/11 work, they still came out there. So it was very rough.

LR [00:52:43] Right. So how long did the 9/11 work last?

[phone rings]

GC [00:52:50] I can't answer that phone. How long did the work last? Till the end of April or May.

LR [00:53:01] And so then how long were families continuing to come to see you?

GC [00:53:06] Oh that was way after that. I would say a couple of years. I mean, I can remember them coming like in 2006. 2005.

LR [00:53:19] Wow.

GC [00:53:19] They came quite a few— I still remember the one woman's name: [Name Redacted]. She was so nice. She thought we were gonna find her son in some kind—they had this thing in their head that we had them buried in the landfill somewhere. Sanitation would get the stuff after the police, the FBI, all of them went through it. We would never do something like that. Never. When we saw something [unclear] came in, we notified them right away. “Get down here. There's a body part here.” You know, it's not something that anybody with a heart would do. So but, they came quite a while after. Quite a while. One woman who I didn't hear from after like 2004 or so and we had become very close, she was old. And she lived in Manhattan, and her son was a fireman. And I can't even remember her name right now. But I believe she might have passed away because she said she was feeling it in heart, she didn't think she'd be around much longer. And then all of a sudden, I didn't hear from her no more. So. It was sad. It was very sad.

LR [00:54:37] Yeah, it sounds like it was incredibly— I mean, you can imagine, you know, that it was a hard time, but it sounds, I mean, it's really—

GC [00:54:45] Well, that's why I was glad I was there, because I don't know if a man would have been able to speak to a mother.

LR [00:54:54] Right.

GC [00:54:54] And expressed that, "You know what? I hurt for you." They might have said, "Listen, your son's gone. He's never coming—" You know what I mean? Because you know it in your head, logically. You know what happened. But, I don't know if a man would have kept his mouth shut on it. So that's why I was glad I was there for that.

LR [00:55:20] Yeah, yeah, oh, I have so many things I could ask you. I'm wondering which direction I should go in now, Gloria—

GC [00:55:29] You can ask me anything. I told you, I'm like an open book.

LR [00:55:32] This has been really wonderful. Let's see. I want to know, you know, you've already spoken to this a little bit, but what do you wish people knew or the world knew about Sanitation's role in response to 9/11?

GC [00:55:50] I wish they had known that we were there from the very beginning, that we were the ones— a lot of people don't know this, and I bet you didn't know before you made this call. To get that street open and clear, all that debris and dust and everything, which piled very high, Sanitation did it. Everyone thinks construction companies did it. Sanitation did it. So the police and fire could get in there and go through the buildings. Sanitation—they came right to work, called in on their days off; they didn't have a day off. They didn't have a chart day. Nothing. We worked right through the holidays. Everything. And no one—when you hear about 9/11, you hear about the police department, you hear about the fire department. [As a] matter of fact, I helped counsel a police officer. He was a Port Authority police officer. And he would come out there just to talk to me because he said he felt comfortable speaking with me about it. And he would come and talk to me. He gave me his badge thing, you know, one of them badges you sew on. I've got it in a cup somewhere here, but he was a very nice man. But he was in the lobby of the building when it happened.

LR [00:57:22] Wow.

GC [00:57:23] And he was devastated by it. And I said, "It's okay for a man to cry. It's okay. You need to get it out." Because he started crying one day he goes, "I got to go." I said, "You don't have to go. Sit down. I'll lock the door. No one will see you crying if that's what you're worried about." But no one acknowledges Sanitation. And I'm sure you've read a lot of things about 9/11, do you ever see anything about Sanitation, and how much they did?

LR [00:58:02] No.

GC [00:58:03] Ever? That's what I'm saying. After all this had gone on, my son who was in the Navy—he was going on deployment, and he was an ensign at the time—and I said, "What can I do for you?" And he said, "Well, if you really want to help me—you can't do nothing for me because I got everything I need." He said, "But a lot of guys join the military because they have no place to go in life. They have nothing. So they learn to get a trade, work with others, so they're able to live a life and make a living." He said, "That's who I worry about." So I said, "Okay." So I went to the commissioner, and I put in a proposal. And we adopted the ship. Sanitation. And it was the USS Austin, which was the last ship built in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. When I tell you how giving they were—Sanitation, we almost sunk that ship [laughs]. We gave them so much stuff.

GC [00:59:14] And one of the bosses was being promoted. And he said, "Gloria, I'd like you to come to this ceremony." He said, "Because you're a big reason why I'm being promoted." And I was very touched by that. And I said, "Okay." And I went there with my new boss because I went through a lot of bosses. They all got promoted [laughs]. And as we're sitting there, they said, "The next honoree," at the ceremony, "is Gloria Coletti." And I'm like, "What?" And Tom, he said, "Gloria, get up there. Get up there." And I went up, and Mayor Bloomberg was up there. And he said, "Gloria, turn around." And I turned around, and there was my son and the captain of the ship, holding the sanitation flag signed by every person that was on that ship. There were 900 sailors and 400 Marines.¹ And it flew in the Persian Gulf. And they brought it back. I was so—I hadn't seen my son since he left, and I never met the captain. We e-mailed. I would let him know when things were coming. And the director of public affairs says, "I'm going to say a few words because Gloria doesn't really speak." And this is what Robin remembers about me. I said, "Excuse me, I've got something to say." [Laughs]. And I took the microphone, and I said, "All of you," it was a new incoming class. I said, "All of you. I want you to know. You're very happy you got the job, but remember what I'm telling you right now: When you leave this room, you don't exist. No one will care about you or worry about you or think about you unless you forget to pick up their pail, unless it's snowing—they'll look for you. Other than that, you don't exist. Just like these two men behind me. The only time you think about the military is when you need them. Other than that, you don't hear nothing. Remember that. So know in your heart, you are important." And I sat down. And Robin said I made her cry. She couldn't believe that I got up and said what I said. And on a funny note—because I told you I'm not tall—Bloomberg goes, "I can't believe you've got a son that age. You look too young." I said, "Please, I got clothes older than you." And I sat down. [Laughter].

GC [01:02:01] And they're all like, "The mayor is trying to pick up our Gloria." [Laughter]

¹ Correction: The ship was home to four hundred Navy personnel and nine hundred Marines.

GC [01:02:10] Because he cracked up. He goes, "You got a good sense of humor." He said, "A lot of people would be afraid to say that to a mayor." I said, "Not me. I'm not afraid of you." Just like I never called anybody "chief." You're not an Indian. I'm not calling you chief. So okay. But, I had to tell you that story because that was important to me. And we did it again. We adopted the next ship he went out on. So [unclear] they really came through. They really came through big time.

LR [01:02:45] So what does it mean to adopt a ship? Can you tell me a bit more about that?

GC [01:02:50] Well, when you adopt a ship, what you're doing is you're telling the ship, "Listen, we know you're not going to be here for Thanksgiving, for Christmas, for Easter, all the holidays. So us back in the States are thinking of you. We appreciate the job you're doing. And we're going to make sure you all get a gift." And everybody on that ship got more than one gift. I mean, I can't tell you stuff I collected and boxed up and sent. We sent gift cards for the young men who joined because they had nothing in life. We sent—oh, oh my God—clothes—you name it, we sent it. I caught one of our guys trying to sneak women magazines into a box. I told him, "Get the box and get the hell out of my office. Get out of here." Because you could get in trouble for that.

LR [01:03:44] Yeah.

GC [01:03:45] But, I mean, it was unbelievable. I actually got a call from a reporter in Austin, Texas. And he goes, "You have some accent. I know you're from New York." I said, "I got an accent. Listen to yourself." [Laughter] And he said, Austin was so proud that New York adopted their ship. That was the last deployment it made. After that, it was decommissioned. And the next ship we adopted was the [USS] Ramage. And it's a lot of work. Believe me. Adopting a ship is a lot of work. You're actually going around begging, "Could you help us out?" And not one dime went to anybody except the people on the ship. Everything went to them. Everything.

LR [01:04:44] Wow.

GC [01:04:47] I wish I still—I have the pictures somewhere. I had pictures. What's his name—the director of public affairs sent me a CD from that day, at the ceremony, but I wish I had a picture. They kept the flag hanging in the lobby for a long time at 125 Worth Street because that was a big thing. You know, think about 900, 1300 people are on that ship. And, when I tell you, over and over again we sent shipments, I'm not kidding. It was, like, unbelievable.

LR [01:05:28] Wow. When was this?

GC [01:05:30] This was in 2005 because they came back in 2006. I'd have to look up the years to be sure, but I know it's right around there. You know what? If you Google my name, you'll see something about the adopt-a-ship thing there.

LR [01:05:55] Okay.

GC [01:05:56] You will actually see it. Sanitation wrote it up in their newsletter.

LR [01:06:06] Oh, yeah—I see it in the summer of 2006 newsletter.

GC [01:06:10] There you go. At least I had the right year [laughs].

LR [01:06:13] Yeah. [Laughter]

LR [01:06:19] Okay, great. I guess, I wanted to ask you, too, a little bit more about 9/11 in that—how did you feel about the events at the time as a New Yorker?

GC [01:06:30] I was fuming, fuming that they attacked us on our grounds. And I'm being honest with you. I got mad when they didn't build the towers back up. I wanted the towers back because they were there part of my life for so long. And instead they built all these other buildings. But in the same vein, it took a long, long time for me to even think about going into New York. I can't look at pictures that took place on that day. To this day, I still can't. The first time I had to go to a 9/11 center for a health checkup, because I do have things wrong with me from that. But, you know, I got nothing to complain about. But there was pictures everywhere. And I went right to the doctor. I said, "You know, you come here to be taken care of. I shouldn't have these pictures in my face of the buildings burning, of people standing on mounds. That's not right. Because it's bad enough you're feeling the way you feel in your head. You shouldn't—" And she apologized to me. And when I went back, she had pictures of flowers on the wall. You know, nice pictures. I said, "I can't deal with that." I still see a psychiatrist because of 9/11. To me, I worried about my son who was in the service. I worried about being attacked again. Anytime you heard a noise or you heard helicopters flying over, you're like, "Oh my God, they're coming back." You know? It's something that's in your head. And to have seen it— personally seen it—see, when you're sitting in New York, the last thing in the world you expect to see is a fighter jet flying over your head. It was like being in a movie, but it wasn't a movie. And I got very angry. I got angry that something wasn't done when the Navy ship, the [USS] Cole, was attacked because that was the start. That was an act of war. And we did nothing. Nothing. And sailors, innocent sailors, who worked in a kitchen were killed. And we did nothing. So that's how I feel about that.

LR [01:09:26] Wow, thank you. Thank you so much, Gloria. I mean, it's been it's been an honor, I think, to hear you speak about this and to hear your experience of that day, and of the time surrounding it, and of your career at the DSNY.

GC [01:09:40] Yes.

LR [01:09:41] It's been really wonderful. I know we've been talking now for a little over— probably a little bit over an hour on this call. So I wanted to see how you're doing timewise because—

GC [01:09:52] Timewise I'm fine. It was my husband trying to call, and I know what he's doing. He went to physical therapy, got out of physical therapy, and he went to the supermarket. And he was calling, "Do you want tissues? Do you want this?" I know what he was calling for. That's why I didn't answer. Every time he goes to the store, he does this to me. So I didn't answer. [Laughs] But, no I'm fine.

LR [01:10:15] Well, I would like to, you know, we've talked about a lot, so if there's anything else— well, I did want— [crosstalk]

GC [01:10:21] I will tell something that I found very interesting while I was working after 9/11 with the insurance guy, which I spoke to other people about. When I was, like, 19 or So I was driving home. Back then—because you're young, hon—but back then you took a road test; they stamped your permit. It was a piece of paper. They stamped it that you passed. And you had to wait for them to mail you a license in the mail. So I was still driving around with the stamp permit. I had just gotten it. I just took my road test. I passed; I got it. And I got pulled over by a cop. And the cop came over to me and said, "You were speeding. Where's your license?" I said, "Well, I didn't even get it. I got this." He goes, "That's a license." And he took it. He came back, and he gave me a speeding ticket. He said I was five miles over the speed limit, or two miles, or whatever it was. And he goes, "What are you doing later?" I said, "You have should asked me that before you gave me the ticket," and I took off. [Laughter] But, you forget about shit like that, you know, as the years go by. Well, while we're working on this—these cars—the insurance man says to me, "Yeah, you got a ticket when you were 19 for speeding." And I looked at him, and I said, "How could you know that? They get rid of it after three to five years." He said, "Gloria, the government never gets rid of anything." Could you imagine?

LR [01:11:56] Wow.

GC [01:11:57] It blew me away. He said, "I could tell you everything that you've ever done insurance-wise in your life." He knew one of our cars was stolen once. And it had been years ago. I said, "Holy crap." He said, "Yeah, everyone thinks once they get a ticket, five years have gone by, it's gone. It's in the wind. No, not true. We never get rid of nothing." How scary is that? To me, that's scary.

LR [01:12:33] Yeah.

GC [01:12:35] Here I am, in my 40s, and this clown's telling me, "You got a ticket when you were 19." Are you kidding me? We became very friendly. That's why he told me, but I told him, I said, "That sucks!" [Laughter]

GC [01:12:54] "That absolutely sucks. That's not right." I said, "I could see if I killed somebody. I got a freakin' ticket." But yeah, see, now you learned something new today.

LR [01:13:08] Yeah. I mean, so this was insurance for—was it for your car? Or was it related to the— [crosstalk]

GC [01:13:12] Actually, it wasn't even insurance. I got a ticket for speeding. It had nothing to do with insurance. Nothing. But because I was driving, it goes into something with the government. And they put it in that, you know—like if they were ever looking for me, they'd say, "Yeah, she got a speeding ticket when she was nineteen. Her car was stolen when she was thirty-one." You know, they go through the whole thing.

LR [01:13:38] Yeah.

GC [01:13:39] Are you kidding me?

GC [01:13:41] This was the insurance man, the United States insurance man. He worked for the government. He was the head insurance guy. And he said any information they get on any American citizen—he didn't say about foreigners. He said, American citizens, they never get

rid of. And I said, "Why would you keep something like that? It's nothing. I didn't kill somebody." He said, "Because they don't get rid of nothing, Gloria. Nothing." I'm like, "Holy crap. Hope I never get another ticket."

LR [01:14:21] Spooky. [Laughter]

GC [01:14:28] Oh my God. But anything else you want to talk about, I got no problem.

LR [01:14:34] Okay, well, one thing about this insurance guy. Can you just—so he was there due to 9/11— [crosstalk]

GC [01:14:42] He was there every day because of 9/11. Yes. Because of the cars.

LR [01:14:50] Okay.

GC [01:14:51] They wanted to know exactly—you know, for all I know, they might have been looking to see if a car was involved before the planes hit. I don't know. He had information on every single car that was in that neighborhood—even ones that were miles away, you know, a few blocks away, but weren't destroyed. He had everything. Everything.

LR [01:15:20] Wow.

GC [01:15:22] And he would go over because—he would come and pick me up and drive me up on the Hill, and we would go through who called me that week. He want—he was very interested in that. Who called about their cars? Who was making a stink? Because there was one guy. He was crazy. He told me I was stealing his car. He wanted his car back. His car was destroyed. I'm like, "Believe me, mister, I don't want your car. If I had it my way, you could have it back. But I can't do that." "Well, give me someone who can." I said, "There's no one who can. I'm in charge of the cars." [Laughs] You know, these are the kind of people you had to deal with.

LR [01:16:06] Yeah, I imagine—how many phone calls were you getting?

GC [01:16:11] A lot. A lot. But there were some that were repeaters. You know? They would call every week. "Did you get to my car yet? When am I getting it back?" Because after a while, you would just lie. "No, we haven't gotten to it yet. We haven't hit that on the list yet." Because you couldn't deal with—it was ridiculous. It was absolutely ridiculous. Now, if my car had been parked there, the last thing I would be thinking is let me call and see if I could get my car back. I would be like, "I'm calling my insurance company and letting them know my car was parked by the World Trade Center, and I haven't heard anything on it." You know? That's how I looked at. This one guy, the guy who was a real pain in the ass, he had an older car that had like—it had, you know—the liability and that was it. And he was determined. He was going to get his car back. He couldn't—he told me, "I can't afford a car." I said, "Well, I can't help you. I can't help you. I don't have your car." I didn't have the nerve to tell him it was being sent to Jersey to be destroyed. I kept my mouth shut. Because he said he was going to sue us all. I said, "Well, my name's Gloria Coletti. You want to throw me in there? Go ahead. I don't care. I don't have your car."

LR [01:17:48] I'm wondering a bit about—you know, we now know how dangerous it was to be exposed to all the toxins at the site—

GC [01:17:57] Yes.

LR [01:17:58] [crosstalk] You were there. But were there also you know, for you at Fresh Kills, were there dangers for you and your colleagues?

GC [01:18:05] Yes, very. [As a] matter of fact, a couple of them we lost. Just a couple of years ago, one of them got kidney cancer. He died right away. Another one got kidney cancer. Another one got hepatitis C from picking up something out of the barge, and it cut his finger. We lost quite a few people there, and there's people that are very sick. One of my friends, he has one kidney now. They had to take one out.

GC [01:18:40] But a lot of us—my doctor—it's actually comical—my doctor happened to be the fire department doctor, but she was my doctor for over 30 years. And I went right to her after this. She was, like, "Gloria, I"—because she was there that day and she said, "Gloria, I can't believe you were there." And she said, "You really got to watch." After that, I ended up—I need nose spray. I had a breath inhaler it, but I've been doing good, so I haven't had to use it. I had to carry it around for a long time. I did get what's called Sjögren's disease. That's why you're hearing every once in a while, I'll stop and drink some water. Your mouth doesn't make saliva anymore. Your eyes, don't—forget it. I can't even describe it. And it's an autoimmune disease. So when it was too full a couple of years ago, it actually overtook my head. And it needed another organ to attack, so I went into kidney failure. It attacked my kidneys. Now it's attacking—while the pandemic went on, it attacked my gums. I lost five teeth, and there was no dentist open. So now I'm going to a dentist to replace the teeth that I lost because the dentist, as soon as he saw me, said, "This is Sjögren's." He knew it right away. But Dr. Kelly said, a lot, a lot of people—not just Sanitation, but fire, police—they're all coming down with this. But they don't have it listed as something that was caused by 9/11. They're trying to add it to the list because too many people in that group came down with it. For no reason. So you know—I said, the way I look at it—you know, I have a different outlook than most people. If that's what God gives me? No problem. Thank you. Thank you for not taking my life. Thank you for not giving—there's people out there suffering way worse than I could even imagine. So if this is what God gives me, I'll handle it.

LR [01:20:51] Wow. Thank you so much for all of this, Gloria. I guess if I wanted to— this has been really great, and I'm sure once we get off this call, I'll be like, "Why didn't I ask her this?" But— [Laughter]

GC [01:21:05] I told you, anytime, feel free. The best time to call me is in the mornings because my husband goes to physical therapy. He goes at eight o'clock in the morning, and he's gone for over an hour because they're really working him, trying to help the Parkinson's. So that's the best time to call me. The worst time to call me is on the weekends because I try and see my grandson. Because, like I said, I had all sons. I got six granddaughters, one grandson, and now I just had another one. Thank God. Scott—the son I told you about—he lost a good seven years of his life from all this crap. He ended up losing his leg in the end. He's married now, and he just had a baby boy at the end of January.

LR [01:21:48] Oh, Congratulations!

GC [01:21:49] He's 42 years old now.

LR [01:21:51] Oh, that's so wonderful.

GC [01:21:53] Yes, yes, so it was worth it all. Because I can remember that day, them telling us, "We're doing everything we possibly can. You can't see him." Can't see him. You can't see him. And we didn't find out till after that, he was dead when they got to him, and they brought him back. They gave him sixteen pints of blood. Sixteen.

LR [01:22:18] Wow.

GC [01:22:19] Imagine? God bless 'em.

LR [01:22:25] So you know, after hearing so much about his story and your story, it's nice to hear that he's doing well now.

GC [01:22:33] You would think he thinks he's the only person in the world ever who had a baby—like I didn't give birth to him, or something—because I'm holding his son, and he says to me, "Watch your arm. Don't squeeze his neck." "Get the hell out of here—" [Laughter] "—I know what I'm doing. I had you." The best was—he called me. I'm allowed to babysit. He's going on his birthday—him and his wife are going to go out. And here—you're gonna laugh at this, Lexie. He says, "My birthday is June—" I said, "I bet you it's June 16th." [Laughter]

GC [01:23:10] You got to tell me when your birthday is? I remember that day very well. [Laughter]

GC [01:23:18] So I said, "You're entrusting me with your son?" "Yes, ma." [laughs] So I'm looking forward to that. But the older grandson—I got excited when I did have a grandson because that's all I knew was boys. So I'm back watching baseball. He's a very good student. He does a lot of work, you know, for a boy. He works with autistic children. He walks for women's breast cancer. He doesn't know anybody with breast cancer. He walks for leukemia. He plays the trumpet in his school band; he's a ninety-nine student, and he's one of the best athletes you could ever see. He's six foot one. He just turned fourteen.

LR [01:24:06] Wow.

GC [01:24:08] And he's a great, great kid. So yeah, I enjoy going and watching him, and I'm allowed to call him Mikey. I'm the only one allowed to call him Mikey. Everybody else calls him Michael. I call him Mikey. So that's where I spend my weekends. At his games.

LR [01:24:28] That's great.

GC [01:24:30] Yeah, especially, most of them are in Jersey [laughter]. Because of his age—there's no more Little League when you're that age. Last year too. But if you think of anything you feel you should have asked me or you say—feel free to call. Don't worry about it. I don't consider you a bother. And I'm glad you got to speak with a woman.

LR [01:25:00] Yeah, I mean, I guess, we could—we could either—we could end with this, if you like—

GC [01:25:04] Because I'll let you know. I'm being honest with you. I'll let you know—all the men, they'll all tell you, "Yeah, well, I did this, and I did that." No, we did it. We did it.

But when you talk to these chiefs, you would think that nothing would have happened if they weren't there. Bullshit. [laughs]

GC [01:25:26] That's all I got to say about that. Bullshit. It would have happened. And I'm very frank about that. If I wasn't there, the work still would have been done. I'm glad I was there because there was no woman, and women were needed in certain positions.

LR [01:25:50] Yeah. What was it like to be one of the only women around?

GC [01:25:59] Well, actually, they thought of me as one of the guys. You know, I was one of the guys. That's exactly how they thought of me. You know, "It's Gloria." You know, "You can say what you want it from of her. It ain't going out of this room." You know, they knew. And if you came to me complaining about your job or something like that, be prepared for what I was going to do to you because I didn't believe in that. You got a job that people would kill to get, and you're going to tell me you don't make enough money. You make too much fucking money. Who you kidding? I would say it right out loud too. "How dare you come in here and say the union better get a better contract. You got a good contract. Get the hell out. Tell your story walking. You know what, quit your job. Watch how fast we replace you." [laughter].

GC [01:26:56] But I also—there were men there who had a lot of problems, personal problems, and they would come, knowing I got there early, into my office and speak to me. I made sure—like one came in one morning. He was addicted to drugs. And I told him, "We have somebody who will help you." And I said, "Listen, don't get upset, but when the boss gets here, I have to let him know. But we're going to get you help today." And he calls his mother, and he told his mother what was going on. And the mother called me back, and she said, "I can't believe you did that for my son." I said, "If it was my son, would you help him?" She said, "Yes." I said, "There you go." He went away. He came back. He was a completely different person. He did wonderful after that. The mother sent me a basket with chocolates and flowers. I called her. I said, "You didn't have to do this." She said, "Yes, I did." She said, "You have no idea. You gave me back my life."

GC [01:27:58] And then I had another guy who came in. He was very upset because he said he felt out of place; he felt the guys were looking at him. He knew inside he was gay. But he's afraid to say anything. I said, "You have nothing to hide. You have nothing to be ashamed of. That's how you're born. It's not something—oh, I'm going to be gay today. That's something that happens to you when you're born. You're born like that. Don't be afraid. And if someone says anything to you or bothers you, come back and give me their name." And he said, "Thank you so much, Gloria. Thank you for understanding." I said, "What you need to do is go speak to a therapist because they'll help you realize that you're still a good person. There's nothing wrong with you. Anybody who looks at you different, there's something wrong with them." So I do feel like I did a lot of that while I was there. They knew to come to my office early and speak to me.

LR [01:29:03] Wow. Yeah, it seems like you were almost the department's therapist, unofficial therapist—

GC [01:29:08] Yes, exactly. Exactly. It was like—I think they [would] look at you, and they knew that you would understand.

LR [01:29:18] Mhmm.

GC [01:29:19] That's how I felt. Because they would just come out of nowhere. I remember the guy who came that one day and told me he was gay, and he felt bad about it, and he said maybe it's because of 9/11. I said, "It's not because of 9/11. That was there before that." I said, "This just helped bring it out because your feelings came to the surface." But then I got upset because a boss did come in while he was talking to me, and he walked in to tell him what he had told me. And he [the boss] goes, "You're telling me stuff I'm not interested in." And I'm like, "I can't believe he just did that after all the talking I did." So I followed him out the door, and I told him, "Listen, here's a number. Call them up. Go talk to them. You can do it on city time. That's what they're there for, and they'll help you. And now I understand what you were saying, because he shouldn't have spoken to you like that." You know? I let him know someone was on his side.

LR [01:30:28] Yeah. I wonder, too, were there times where it was really difficult to be one of the only women around? For you?

GC [01:30:44] There was times when it was difficult because men, certain men, felt like women aren't supposed to be smart or empowered. Like one guy, he said, "I want to know what time you work, and who do you report to anyhow? You come and go as you please. You do what you want." So he called Fiat on me, which is like internal affairs for the cops, and said, I come and go as I please when I'm supposed to work. I'm not there. They investigated me, and then they told me afterwards, it was unfounded; and they wouldn't take anything more from him. I said, "I can't believe this clown did what he did. I can't believe that." But, like you said, because I was a woman and I was able to go in and say, "Listen, you got to do this today, you got to do this today because this guy didn't show up—" He took it like, "I'm a supervisor. Who the hell is she to tell me?" So he figured he'd get even with me not knowing I did nothing wrong because I could account for any time I was supposed to be at work. I was there. So that was the only difficult part, and it wasn't a lot of them. It was only a few of them.

LR [01:32:17] Yeah.

GC [01:32:17] Most of them were really, really good guys. But like they say, one bad apple don't spoil the whole bunch.

LR [01:32:26] Mm hmm.

GC [01:32:27] So you can't say because he's like that they're all like that.

LR [01:32:34] Right, right. Yeah, that makes sense. Well, wow. This has been really great. Normally, we try to ask some—I mean, if you have a few more minutes, I can ask you what is usually an opening question. But I wanted to make sure, we were able to—which is kind of about you before this—which is like—you know, where and when you were born and a little bit about your childhood.

GC [01:32:58] Oh, are you ready for this? Are you ready for this? I was born on Staten Island. Sixty-seven years ago. I'm going to be 68 this year. Now, I was born—I was the 11th of 11 children. I had a sister that was 20 years older than me. I have a sister who is 17 years older than me. She's still alive. All my brothers are dead. I had five brothers. They're all dead.

I still have one, two, three [counting]— three sisters alive. So there's four of us left. When I was one, my mother left my father, and left us behind. And—see, now these questions are rough. These are rougher even than 9/11. What happened was she did come back. She ran away with another man. I always thought they were married when I was growing up. I didn't know till I grew up that they were just common law [married]. And when they ran away, they came back one day while my father was at work. My father was a bus driver in Brooklyn. He used to take a ferry to Brooklyn. And they took my sister who's eleven years older than me; my sister who's two years older than me; I had a sister who was one year older than me—I lost her. When she was thirteen she got hit by a train—and me. So there was three of us little kids—one after another, one year apart—and our one older sister. They took her so she could babysit. They took us for a year. My father called the police. There was a thirteen-state alarm out for her, but we had just, like, disappeared. Now, this I don't remember. But, this I remember. I remember being dropped off on a corner when I was a kid. And them telling my sister Elaine—she was the older one—"Go down to number twenty-one. That's where you're going to go." And that's where my father lived. And they left. So we went to twenty-one, and my father took us right in, and she had left behind my two brothers who were younger than my sister, my older sister. And somebody called child welfare and said, "He works and leaves these little kids home alone." So they stepped in, and they were going to send us to different orphanages. And my father went to the monsignor and said, "I'm raising my kids Catholic." He was Protestant. He said, "I'd like to put them where I could see them." And the only place, then, was Mount Loretto. I don't know if you've ever heard of it, but that's an orphanage on Staten Island, Mount Loretto. And the monsignor agreed to take us all there. So we all went to Mount Loretto. And I was four years old when I went. And I remember him saying on the way there—you know, that we were going there, and he couldn't stay with us, and this is hard cause I thought he was kidding. I thought he was joking, and he was going to turn around and take us back home. And he dropped us off, and he left. And I was there till I was almost ten.

LR [01:36:47] Wow.

GC [01:36:49] And it was a very hard childhood.

LR [01:36:54] Yeah.

GC [01:36:55] Because bad things happened. But, you know what? I went through rough teenage years because I didn't want to hurt anymore. I just didn't want to hurt anymore. My mother came back into my life. I remember meeting her when I was seven. She bought me my communion dress. And I just made up my mind then, you know, like, "I can't—I can't do this." And then she said, "Come live with us." So me and my two sisters went. When I was 11, we went to live with her. And within a year, my sister got hit by a train. And we were very, very close. I mean, because when you're at a place like that, you become very close. And when she got killed, that's when I found out my stepfather wasn't my stepfather—I didn't find out till later—[he] was an alcoholic. And he started drinking very heavily. So I couldn't stay. I couldn't do it. I went back to my father's house, and I stayed with my father after that. And thankfully, you know, I did do a lot of drinking and messing around. You know, I was going to school. I said I'm not going to school anymore because I know more than they're friggin' teaching me. So I dropped out, and I took the test. The GED. And I scored so high that they offered me free college. And I said—I ended up—I was pregnant with John. And I said, "I can't do it." So that was it. That was the beginning of my life—that it became. My mother lived till she was 92. Now, I had very little to do with her. And one of my sisters called me up once after Scott had had the accident and said, "Mom is upset because you

never come see her." I said, "Tell her I'm too busy doing something she knows nothing about—being a mother." And I hung up the phone. [laughs] And then after, when Scott was starting to get better, and I was going back to work, she was put in a nursing home on Staten Island. So I said, "You know if I don't go see her, I'm her. I'm the same person." So I made it a point to go there once a week and visit with her for an hour. And I did it right until she died. And I feel like I did the right thing because now I proved to myself I was not like her. I would not abandon somebody. And after she died, that was it. I never—I go see my father's grave. I go to my brothers' graves, but I do not go to my mother's because I feel I did what I had to do. That's it. But, that was my childhood.

LR [01:39:48] Wow. Wow, Gloria. Well—

GC [01:39:54] If you look up Mount Loretto, you'll understand. I was always in trouble. Because I was a small thing, but I became—we, me and my sisters, we were a minority there. White kids weren't there. So to me, I never looked at people by the color of their skin, and I still don't. I don't believe in that. We were sisters. You know? They would follow me around like little Glorias because I was very brave. "Little Gloria will tell us what to do." And I ended up making the best of a bad situation. It's just that every time they went to Coney Island or something, Gloria wasn't allowed to go because she was in trouble. [laughs].

LR [01:40:49] Wow—

GC [01:40:52] That was it. That was my childhood.

LR [01:40:56] Thank you for sharing that with me. Yeah.

GC [01:40:59] Yeah.

LR [01:41:01] Yeah, sounds like hard—It sounds hard.

GC [01:41:04] It was hard. You know what was the hardest thing? To think—especially, I'm a mother myself— thinking that you could give birth to a child and then walk away.

LR [01:41:18] Mm hmm.

GC [01:41:20] I could never imagine walking away from one of my kids, never. And I just think, "How could she do that?" And it was so bad—when she turned eighty, I said, "I'll throw a surprise party for her, I'll invite everybody over, and we'll have cake and stuff." And my son, Michael, he's like me. He's very sensitive inside. He's the nurse. He's a great kid. And he came into the kitchen. He was about, I would say, fifteen or sixteen at the time. I'm not sure, but right around there. And he goes, "Mom, you got to go inside and tell grandma knock it off—to please stop talking like that." I go, "What are you talking about?" He goes, "She said she wishes abortions were legal years ago. So I told her, 'Don't say that, grandma, because if they were—'" She said, "She wishes abortions were legal [unclear]. She would never have had any kids." So my son said to her, "Don't say that, grandma, because if that's— if that would have been true, I wouldn't have my mother, and I wouldn't be here." She goes, "I don't give a fuck. I wish they were." So I went into the living room [laughs], and I said to her, "Don't talk to my son the way you're talking to him. And if you make a statement like you just made, I'm going to throw you out the fucking window." [Laughs] And I walked away. Because to say that to — you could say what you want to me, but to say that to my son.

You know? I thought that was horrible. But on a good note, my father was great. He was absolutely great. He came every Saturday morning because he worked Monday through Friday. He came every Saturday morning and picked us up and took us home for the weekend and brought us back Sunday night. He was absolutely wonderful. And that's what really touched my heart—because my kids—my father passed away young; he passed away the year John was born. And my kids really never knew him. But Scott has heard so much about him that when he had a son in January, he named him after my father, which I thought was wonderful. He named him Arthur Daniel after my father and my husband. And I thought that was wonderful. I started crying when I heard that.

LR [01:43:58] Yeah, that's beautiful.

GC [01:44:00] That really was. So I thank God for him. My father was like a jack of all trades, master of none. He taught me so much crap that, you know, my husband goes, "Where'd you learn that from?" "My father." [laughs] My father. He [my husband] goes—one day it was real bitter, bitter, bitter cold. So I turned the water on just so it was dripping. He goes, "What are you doing?" And I said, "This way the pipes don't freeze." He goes, "Where do you come up with this crap?" I said, "My father." It works. [laughs] Your pipes will never freeze if you leave it drip—just drip, drip, drip. You're not spending a lot of water. You're not spending a lot of money, but your pipes won't freeze because they're working.

LR [01:44:49] Mhmm. I just learned something!

GC [01:44:51] See! Now you just learned something. Thank my father [laughs]. You don't make it run. Just make it drip. That's all. And there's really not too much more to say about—the thing that destroyed me when I was a kid was when my sister got killed. That destroyed me. Because, like I said, when you're put in a situation like that, you become very, very close to your siblings.

LR [01:45:24] Yeah.

GC [01:45:24] And we both—like, my other sister who's two years older than me—Dolores is gone. She's the one who passed away. But the one who's two years older than me, we were close, but as we grew up, we went [in] different directions. Diane built a wall around her. She never had children. She's a very angry person. We get along. But I'm the opposite of her. If you tell me something sad, I'm going to cry. I feel bad. She's like, "Get over it. Life goes on." You know? We're two different people, but it's a reaction to the same situation. You never know how a person is going to react to a situation until they go through it. Of course, my husband goes, "She's so mean." I said, "Danny, it's not her fault. She reacted different than I did." She reacted that "you ain't going to hurt me because I'm going to build a wall around myself. I don't want to know nothing." So—

LR [01:46:33] Yeah, yeah, everyone processes things differently.

GC [01:46:36] Differently—exactly, exactly.

LR [01:46:43] Yeah, wow. It's been an honor, Gloria, to listen to you speak. Really moving.

GC [01:46:50] Oh, thank you. Someone told me once, "If you ever wrote your life story, it would be a bestseller." [laughs]

LR [01:46:57] I think it would be. I mean—[laughs]

GC [01:47:00] You've only heard pieces of what happened to me when I was a kid because there's certain things I just—I can't, you know, I just can't.

LR [01:47:08] Yeah.

GC [01:47:09] But you will know one thing. I never once raised my hand to one of my children. Ever. If they did something wrong, they had to stand in the corner and face the wall and think about what they did and be able to turn around and explain to me what they did wrong and why they shouldn't be part of the family because of what they did. And then they were allowed back. So that's a clue to some of the stuff I'm leaving out.

LR [01:47:41] Yeah, I'm so sorry that happened to you.

GC [01:47:45] Yeah, well, you know what? I'm glad I broke the chain.

LR [01:47:49] Yeah.

GC [01:47:51] That's how I look at it.

LR [01:47:52] Hmm.

GC [01:47:57] That's probably why I'm such a—I'm a big, big animal lover. Big. [crosstalk] I won't eat meat. I have a dog, Lucky. He's a rescue dog.

LR [01:48:11] And you don't eat—[crosstalk]

GC [01:48:12] I've had—he's my fourth dog. I love animals, love them. I won't get a cat because I got attacked by a cat once. And that was it for me. [laughter]

GC [01:48:25] It jumped up. Scratched my whole face. I said, “unh uh, no.” Well, I just fed the friggin' thing, and it attacked me. No, thank you. [laughter] Give me Lucky who curls up next to my legs and just lays there and goes to sleep.

LR [01:48:43] I love dogs.

GC [01:48:45] Oh, ah—forget it. I had two corgis. This was—all of a sudden, corgis from this Instagram crap—

GC [01:48:53] Used to be, you could rescue corgis. People didn't want them. Now, you can't. They want, like, six thousand dollars for a corgi. What, are you crazy? I had two corgis. My first one was Penny. Then after that, I ended up with a pug when Scott had his accident. The man who raised them knew my husband, and he gave him pick of the litter for Scott, so he could have the little pug. And he became ours. We named him Bert because of Bert Lahr—he played the Cowardly Lion on *The Wizard of Oz* because that little pug was afraid of everything. So we named him Bert. And then my husband knew I never got over losing Penny. So on Valentine's Day one year, my son Michael shows up with this little crate and in it is another little corgi. So we named him Ernie. So people think we named after *Sesame*

Street. They don't know that we just did that as a joke. And then unfortunately, I lost Ernie a couple of years ago, and we already had Lucky. Thank God. You know, so now we just have Lucky. That's it. I said, but I will never not be without a dog. Never. I love dogs.

LR [01:50:12] Yeah, they're so wonderful [unclear]

GC [01:50:13] [crosstalk] And dogs know if you like them. Every dog I have ever been around comes right to me. I'm serious. They know when someone doesn't like them. They know. Or someone's afraid of them. I just love them. Because I went over [to] my daughter-in-law's house, they got to a dog. She said, "I can't believe the way Pebbles is coming after you." I said, "Because she knows. She knows." So that's it. I love, I love— well, I love all animals, you know, but I can't have them all. But for that reason, I won't eat meat. I won't, you know, just the thought of—you know, here's something you probably didn't know. I'll give you another little tip that you probably didn't know. I love pigs. Pigs are very smart. Do you know Jell-O is made from pigs' intestines and bones and sinew? They ground it up. That's what causes the gelatin to set. Did you know that?

LR [01:51:26] I didn't know that.

GC [01:51:28] Yeah, I will never eat Jell-O. When I found that out, I got sick. I said, "You know how many people—" I never once stopped to say where does gelatin come from? Most of it is pigs. Sometimes they use cows. That's disgusting.

LR [01:51:51] Yeah.

GC [01:51:52] So I won't eat Jell-O no more.

LR [01:51:56] How long have you been a vegetarian?

GC [01:51:59] Well, I'm not a vegetarian. I have to say that because I will eat eggs. I won't eat meat. Period.

LR [01:52:08] Yeah.

GC [01:52:08] No kind of meat at all. I'd say, it's got to be a good 10 years now. Easy. And I feel ashamed that I had never checked into all this earlier. Didn't you ever read these papers? In the news over in friggin' China and Taiwan? They eat dogs. They raise dogs, fatten them up—they never get out of the cage until they're too fat to move—and then they take them and eat them. How disgusting is that? The dogs don't go around eating people. And that's why I don't put down people who eat meat. Because I understand, you know, you're eating it to live. You're not going out and killing them. I hate hunters. I hate them. But you're just killing them just to kill—like this is a sport. It's not a sport. They don't have a little vest on and a gun—

LR [01:53:12] Yeah.

GC [01:53:13] —to shoot back. They're just out there living their lives, and you come along with your little vest and gun, your orange vest, and shoot them. And then hang their head on the fucking wall. Shame on you. And that's it. I shouldn't be dumping all this on you. I feel bad now.

LR [01:53:38] No, [crosstalk]—don't feel bad. It's really interesting for me. I think you should write a memoir. [Laughter]

LR [01:53:47] Write your life story.

GC [01:53:50] Yeah—put everything in that I left out that I didn't tell you about. Really turn your head. Everyone who knows me says that, "Gloria, you should write a book." [laughs]

LR [01:54:06] Yeah, this has been really great for me, Gloria. I so appreciate you taking all this time and telling me everything and trusting me with it. So I think, you know, I think we can probably, if it sounds good for you, stop here.