

Elaine Jankowski Arnold

Oral History Interview

April 7, 2013

VT: This is Virginia Thomas and I am doing an oral history interview with Ms. Elaine Arnold. Today is Sunday, April 7, 2013. It is about 2:00 PM (Eastern Time). We are in Ms. Arnold's home in Sterling Heights, MI.

Ms. Arnold, I'd like to begin with some biographical information about you. Could you tell me where and when you were born and a little bit about your early years?

EA: St. Francis Hospital, Hamtramck, Michigan. I used to be teased that after I was born they tore the hospital down. [Laughter] My father was a blue collar worker. I remember him being out of work a lot. He was a hard-working man. My beginning years, I remember the Charles housing projects on Charles Street in Buffalo. We lived in a three-room unit and then we moved to a ... I think it was called a four- or five-room unit upstairs. I remember the address 5820 Charles. [Laughter] From there, when my father found a job at Detroit Molding and Engineering, the projects at that time had a wage-thing so he had to buy ... he had to find a regular house and he built a house or had a house built on Dwyer, 48352 Dwyer. It's funny – those numbers I remember.

So, I grew up in a blue collar area. We were just down the street from the Plymouth Lynch Road factory. I remember one of the stories that my Dad told about getting part-time work at Plymouth. He didn't have any tools. He took a screwdriver and some rocks and some pliers that he borrowed from my uncles and he put them into a toolbox and when he was going through the line they would shake the box and that's how

he got to work at Plymouth for two weeks. He collected newspapers, he collected scrap in between jobs.

Times were ... I grew up when times were very, very tough. I know what it's like to live off a garden. I know what it's like to have a father go to the neighborhood store and say to Charlie, "I'd like some free soup bones because I have a great big giant dog," and we didn't own one, "and it has to have a little bit of meat on it." Well, my Mom would boil the heck out of those bones and then he would shave the meat off so we would have meat on the table along with whatever produce we got out of the garden. So I know what it's like to grow up ... my father said we were never poor, we were rich. We were rich with love.

He always made sure the house payment was made, he made sure the utility payments were made. My mother was a stay-at-home mom. They all were at that time.

I went to Cass Tech ... Technical High School. Took three busses to go there. My father at that time ... I think he was making twenty-five, maybe thirty-five cents an hour, maybe fifty cents. He had found a job at Detroit Molding and Engineering which was on Mt. Elliot and Six Mile and it was a challenge for him to give me bus fare and something to have for lunch and the books. He did it because of the fact back then a high school graduate, especially from Cass Tech, was like a college graduate now.

So, that's pretty basically my background. I studied commercial arts, and I ended up in politics.

VT: So, when when and why did you decide to run for Sterling Heights City Council?

EA: I ... we had an ordinance in the city. It was against recreational vehicles and I had become quite involved. We had at that time a travel trailer and they wanted to prohibit them. It's ... I just felt at that time it was an intrusive law and I got involved and the more I got involved the more I get ... got acquainted with politics and I found myself ... my Cass Tech commercial art training ... I found myself helping to design other peoples' literature. Back then you all ... everything was done by hand, you took it into a printer and laying out stuff and typing. Just sort of one thing led to another and I got acquainted with political people and, I don't know, it just became a calling. It just happened.

VT: So, when were you first elected?

EA: I was elected ... I ran for County Commissioner a couple times, did very, very well, but I ran against an incumbent. And then I decided to run for Sterling Heights City Council. I figured I could do some good. I ran in 1993. I only served a two-year term. And the reason the term ... I was the top vote getter, by the way. I received over ten thousand votes. At that time it was very unheard of. And my career was cut short, I feel, by the Detroit Newspaper Strike.

VT: So, 1995 when the strike began was your last year?

EA: It was my last year. In fact, when I lost the election, I received less votes than I had yard signs. Further on in the interview that will probably be, that will be explained, but I ended up receiving less votes than I had yard signs on peoples' lawns.

VT: But, did ... were a number of the other members of City Council not re-elected?

EA: Sam Palazola lost, Eugene Solinski lost. Oh, goodness gracious, I can't remember the other fellow's name right now. Andy Zoicheck lost. There's five of us that lost. Myself, Sam Palazola, Andy Zoicheck, Eugene Solinski. OK, Richard Notting ran unopposed, so he got back on and Diane Kowski won ... got back on and Jay Pollard got back on. But anybody that tried to help the strike, tried to see an end to the strike, lost.

VT: So, at the start of the Detroit Newspaper Strike in July of 1995, you had only held office for about a year and a half?

EA: About that, yeah.

VT: What were your feelings about the strike when it began? What were your thoughts? Did you see it coming?

EA: I think that your questions are gonna be going ... they're gonna go too far in the future.

VT: Tell me ...

EA: All right, when I got aboard City Council we had ... I was definitely a blue-collar thinker, definitely. On Council was Jay Pollard, who was a right-wing wacko. You never knew exactly where he was coming from or why. He was against unions even though he wanted Richard Notting, who was a union board worker, he wanted Richard to get him into the union. Then there was Diana Kowski, I never knew where she was coming from. Andy Zoicheck and Eugene Solinski were Republicans, I mean hard-core Republicans. In hindsight, I'll be able to fill in what was going on.

I got on Council and I was very, very diligent. I did my homework. I would ask questions constantly. One of my goals, and I learned that from watching other politicians, if you have a particular goal for any reason, go for it the first year. One of my goals was to put up a memorial for the women that served in the military, past, present, and future.

And now, like I said, hindsight will tell you twenty-twenty. When I was going down to Pat Lehman's office, she was the PR director for the City of Sterling Heights, her office door was always closed. And, I would have to wait five, ten, fifteen minutes for people to come out of that office. Coming out of that office would be Bill Driscoll, who wrote for the Macomb Daily, and police officers. This was time and time again. And here, I'm trying to work and solicit donations for this memorial. Never gave it a thought. I was new. Never gave it a thought. Come to find out, after I was out of office, what was going on in that room, is that Bill Driscoll, along with the police officers and other reporters, were watching tapes from California, the strike in California. They were watching the correct way to handle a strike, the correct way to pull out the smallest or the largest, or what could be perceived as the trouble-makers.

VT: This was back in '93?

EA: This was back in '93 '94. And I didn't know it. And what angers me today is that everybody at City Hall held a union card, were ... we negotiated union contracts for them. Pat Lehman, our PR director, was in the union and she never slipped any of us, any of us, a note letting us know what was going on, including the police department – they are union. Well, of course, they were union during contract time in the City

of Sterling Heights, and when the strike came about they said they were an association. They're union. They are union. They have contracts, they are union. And, not one union person in the whole City Hall ever even slipped us a note and let us know that this was going on.

VT: What did that mean to you when you found out the videos and the planning, what did that tell you?

EA: Well, I found out also that that was done under the auspices of the only person who wasn't in the union was our, our City Manager, Steve Duchene. Steve Duchene had been cooperating for two years, before they were even in negotiations, with the Detroit Newspaper Agency. And the union people in that city knew this was going on and never said a word. Today, this angers me. And I, and I think that every union person in the State of Michigan, whether they be a municipal union or a State union, or a regular union for the big three or some other manufacturer, whatever, ought to be angered by this.

We were blindsided. We were blindsided as Council. We didn't have a clue this was going on. To have the police officers in the basement – at that time the PR department was in the basement in an allocated room – to be in the basement watching these tapes, being instructed how to form a "V", how to bang on the shields, how to administer your tear gas, how to administer your pepper spray, and have the City Manager sitting at the table with the Detroit Newspaper Agency, planning all this. And the union people sitting in that PR department knew it and never said a word. Yes, as you can hear in my voice right now, I'm angry.

VT: You're saying that a relationship was forming between members of the City Council, the City Manager, the police...

EA: No, there was no relationship with the City Council. We knew nothing. We absolutely knew nothing. The City Council are elected officials to protect the residents of Sterling Heights – we knew nothing.

VT: So, the relationship was being formed between the City Manager, the police department and DNA before there was ever talk of strike.

EA: Right. And the PR director downstairs and I'm sure there was other union workers down there in that knew what was going on and never ever never – they could have slipped us a note – never told us that there was a relationship going on. Yet, in the meantime, we're negotiating contracts with our union brothers and sisters in that city, and they couldn't tell us?

VT: But, is it your feeling that this something that the City Manager...

EA: I think the City Manager had a way of intimidating people. It was pretty obvious that he had a way of intimidating people. I would like to, somewhere down the line, talk to these people. I don't if that will ever come to fruition. I would like to look Pat Lehman in the eye and ask her why she did what she did. I hold her responsible for for helping Steve Duchene form this union with the Detroit Newspaper Agency.

I got blamed during the strike of of of being involved. I had every right to be involved. I had every right to make sure that our laws were were were abided by. There was absolutely ... this was collusion, this was bribery ... it it just was wrong. It was just plain wrong.

VT: So, when the strike began, you were surprised.

EA: I was surprised. I was totally surprised. Again, I'm going to say, I did not know this was going on before the strike. I found this out after I

was out of office. And because I found this out on out on ... because I found this out after I was out of office every time I think about it, it makes me angry. The first time ... a couple times the City Manager come up to me, he said, "What does Jerry tell you about the negotiations?" I says, "He doesn't tell me anything about the negotiations. That's his union." "Well, that's your husband." Steve Duchene's the City Manager. He says, "Well, what do you mean he doesn't tell you anything?" I says, "Why should Jerry tell me anything about the negotiations? That's *his* union. That's for *him* to negotiate. It has nothing to do with *us*."

The City Manager was trying to see if I knew anything. That snake, that snake had the audacity to question me when he already was talking to everybody at the Detroit Newspaper Agency and working with the police already against the workers.

The first day of the strike ... Jerry belonged to a golfing league through the Detroit Newspaper Agency. He called me up about seven, eight o'clock and he said, "We were notified out on the golf course [this is the golf course over here on ... let me think ... Sunnybrook ... that's in Sterling Heights] that there would be a strike and more details ... that there *would* be a strike, more details to follow." They didn't even have picket signs yet. Then I got a ... that was the call from my husband. Then I got another call. For the life of me, I don't remember who or where it was from. I think it was anonymous. It said, "Councilwoman Arnold, I think you ought to go to Sixteen Mile and Mound. Go see what's going on." I got in the car and went to Sixteen Mile and Mound. At that time, there was a place called The Paper Clip. It was where the employees used to go and have lunch. We didn't have any McDonald's or Burger Kings or anything like that back then. All we had was ... that



was the only eating place we had back then other than probably sandwiches at their lunchroom.

I went down there and people were just millin' around. They were talking about there's going to be a strike. And then all of a sudden there there out of the somewhere from the newspaper on the other side of the fence was these jack-booted ... they looked like something from the movie, Cool Hand Luke. They had the blouse black pants and jump boots, black shirts on, some kind of a cap pulled way over their eyes. They all had big dark sunglasses on and every other one had a camera. Back then the cameras were large. They had cameras. I'm thinking, wait a minute, this is weird. There isn't even a strike yet. I'm walking back and forth, talking to the people. They said, yeah, we heard that we're on strike. This is the people, some of the people, that I knew from the newspaper. I knew a lot of the people. After all, my husband worked there. Police cars started pulling on the island across the street. Now, you have to understand, Mound Road's got five lanes goin' north and five lanes goin' south with an island in the middle. These police cars are pullin' in and pullin' in and pullin' in and pullin' in and pullin' in. And this just didn't make any sense to me at all, so I went across the street to The Paper Clip and I said to the owner of The Paper Clip, Jerry's wife, her ... the owner's name was Jerry also, "Ms. Wiggans," I said, "can I use your phone?" That was way before cell phones. Hardly anybody had a cell phone back then. I called the City Manager at home. I told him to get down there. "What's going on? Why do we have a police presence?" Could he explain to me what was going on?

So, I hung up with him. I went back across the street to talk with the people and this truck pulled into the middle gate. They used to have all

the gates open. This truck pulls into the middle gate with a bunch of little kids, young kids, younger people. Behind the wheel of this truck, it was a white panel truck, a smaller type truck, a little bit bigger than a van, but smaller than a big truck, and it pulled in the middle gate. And I remember one of the guys beatin' on the hood of the car, not beatin' on it but bangin' on it saying, "If you're a scab, you're going to the wrong gate." If you want to get inside this plant, you gotta back up, you gotta go around, you've got to go into the other gate. So then they said, well, if you're a replacement worker or whatever's goin' on, he said you're goin' in the wrong gate.

All of a sudden the police come across the street, they come running across the street. They grabbed this man who was doing nothing wrong, they pivoted him around and threw him up against the truck and cuffed him. Well, when Steve Duchene came, I asked him, I said, "What's going on? I saw the first arrest, and I'll be a witness." That man did nothing. If anything, he was telling the people, the driver and the passengers of that truck that they were going to the wrong gate.

Steve Duchene ... what kind of surprised me is that Steve Duchene was there awful quick. Later on in the story, you'll find out why. So, we walked around and a few of the people talked to Steve Duchene and they were explaining to him about what they were negotiating for and he was ... he was talking with them and I kept saying, "Is this ... is this necessary?" He never gave me an answer. Never gave me an answer.

I came home. I turned on the TV. I saw pictures on that TV from the angles that they were taking them that absolutely surprised me. They ... this is early in the ... early ... they said that they were making arrests ... that they were making arrests ... that they were arresting people. I

was trying to figure out why were they arresting people. They were showing people being put in these bands and being taken away. I said this is it. I can't sit home. I got back in the car and went back over there. I said what's going on? Why are the police, cops, whatever, arresting people? They were arresting them for jaywalking.

Jaywalking? There still was no real official strike. There was a handful of people that had picket signs and they were marching on one of the gates. It was a far ... the gate farthest south of the Detroit News Plant.

And, my husband was there. He was talking with a few people and he said, "I'll tell you what," he says, "I'll grab a picket sign," he says, "and I'll walk for a while," he says, "and then we're going to go home." And, I said, "Yeah, I think that'd be a good idea," I says, "because I don't understand what's going on. I says, tomorrow, I says, I'm goin' down, I'm going to find out from the City Manager what the "H" is goin' on around here.

So, I observed the people walking across the street. I also observed across the street there's police cars, there's police cars lined up, just lined up. There's police in riot gear, shields, helmets, batons, and there's a handful of strikers, and and as a truck was to come in with the replacement workers, all they would do is they would walk their circle and then the replacement workers would go in.

Well, one of the guys, his name was Kenny Middleton, really, real tall guy. He must be about seven-six. Anyways, there's a couple, real, I'm five-four so he would call. There was a couple other girls about the same height. He turned around and he said, "You know, I got a very, very uneasy feeling about this next time when they come over." He says, "I don't know why, I got a very uneasy feeling. And, I want you

little girls," he says, "to back up, fifteen, twenty feet away from us when we walk the driveway." I said, "Oh, Kenny, nothing's gonna happen." He said, "Just trust me, I got this gut instinct something's gonna happen." O.K., so we we back up. Another truck is coming down and I heard drums, drums, it sounded like drums to me. Until then, I didn't hear drums. Heard drums. And, I had just had oral surgery, I was just getting over oral oral dental implants and I had quit smoking. And I said to one of the girls, I said, "I'm a nervous wreck, throw me a cigarette. I went to light the cigarette, and I looked up, and I don't, didn't see Kenny get hit, but, Kenny, blood was coming out of his nose and is mouth, and he was like twirling and weaving, and twirling and weaving. And – Bam! He hit the gravel, up towards, closer to the Detroit Newspaper Agency, and he laid there on the ground. I froze. I did not know what to do. I froze, I thought he was killed.

One of the ... one of the people had a phone, and he said, "I've got a phone," and he threw the phone to me and I said, "I don't know how to work this thing." He did something to the phone to make it ... make sure it would work. I pressed zero for operator. We still had operators back then. I said to the operator, I said, "I don't know what happened," I says, "but, I need to get a hold of sheriff's department." Somebody from the sheriff's department was on the other end of the phone. I said, "I don't know what's going on, but the police department just hurt a striker, and they did nothing wrong. They just hurt a striker and he's laying there on the pavement in the gravel. Can can you send the sheriff's department out here?" And her reply to me is, "We've already been notified." They had already been notified. I didn't have a clue who notified them.

So, I hung up and I said, "I called the sheriff's department, they said they've been notified." So, I said, "Give me the phone back." I got back on the phone and I called the Fire Department. Our Fire Department in the City of Sterling Heights ... if I ever, if you ever, if anybody ever gets sick, gets sick in the City of Sterling Heights, we have the best-trained paramedics. If if God wants to give you a second chance they're gonna help Him. They are the best-trained in the world, as far as I'm concerned. I have seen their training. They're awesome.

So, anyway, I called the Fire Department, and I said that one of the strikers was hurt, I don't know how bad. I said we pulled him from where he was laying, I said we've got a handful of teeth, we put them in water, we put them, we put them in water. I had heard that if you put the teeth in water, they can push them back in the mouth. And, I said we were afraid to send him across the street to the police. I'm afraid to send him across the street to the police. Here I am, a sitting Council person and I am afraid to send an injured person across the street to the police. I was terrified.

And, Kenny, couple of times he got up and he said ... by the way, this was Mr. Middleton, I knew him as Kenny. I never broke bread with him, just knew him as Kenny. O.K., he a couple times got up and he was going to go across the street and we told him no, you just stay here and the Fire Department is coming. And, we waited and we waited and we waited and we waited for the Fire Department to come. It took, it seemed like forever, it took about a half an hour or better. I had called the Fire Department and told them to come out, we had an injured person, and they got in their truck immediately. I called fire station right here on Fifteen Mile. The plant's between Fifteen Mile and

Sixteen Mile. Didn't realize at the time that the police had barricaded Mound Road between Fifteen and Sixteen.

VT: So, they couldn't pass?

EA: There was no traffic, there was no witnesses. Absolutely no traffic going north and no traffic going south. They had barricaded that. I called our Mayor and he went across the street immediately. And, he was the one that said to me, "Elaine, didn't you notice that the street was blocked?"

There was so much that went on that that that 'til today, I just, even giving this interview, I'm shaking inside. To witness somebody getting, going down like that. What happened was one of the officers come across the street, he took his shield and he jammed it right straight up where it braised Kenny's lips and up under his nose. Kenny was slightly buck-teethed, it caught his teeth and it pulled his teeth out.

We rinsed Kenny off, and then, eventually, after Richard Notte came, we, Kenny Middleton was walked across the street and he was taken to the ambulance. By the way, Universal Ambulance had also cut a deal with the Detroit Newspaper Agency. They were on Treasure Island, it became known as Treasure Island. They were already stationed on Treasure Island. Later on, during the strike, we found out that Universal Ambulance was giving hot meals, showers, and sleep time to the officers. And, they had a contract with the City to provide ambulance service. Well, evidently, they had cut a different deal with the City Manager and the Detroit Newspaper Agency, because they were giving mutual rest, food, and showers to the police officers.

VT: When the City contracts with outside agencies, is the City Council normally involved?

EA: Yes, Ma'am. That was not part of their job description. That was not part of their job description to be there and give food and shelter and sleeping quarters to the police officers. That was not part of their job description. Their job description is to transport. Now, if somebody got hurt, an ambulance would be called and then they would come and they would take care of them. But, Universal Ambulance was already stationed on Treasure Island.

Anyways, getting back to that night, I went across the street, my son was with me, Jerry was with me, there was a couple of other people over with me, there was a couple of representatives from the Teamsters Union. I was so green as to what was going on with the strike. I didn't know there was six separate unions involved with them. I thought everybody was one union like my Dad worked with one union. Anyway, later I found out it was Teamsters, it was typographical, it was CWA, it was Local 13. I can't think of the other two. It was the reporters, there's another one, a sixth one, I can't think of what it is.

VT: All of those formed the Metropolitan Council of ...

EA: Of unions, yes, but I, you know, negotiations was with all six. Anyways, there was two representatives there that happened to be there. One was John Peralta, and why can't I remember the other fellow's name. Well, later on, if you ever do a documentary, look up his name.

Anyways, Steve Duchane was there. Steve Duchane was with the Police Department. I walked up to him and I looked at him. I just stood there

and looked at him. I could not believe my eyes. I had called him and asked him was this necessary, why are we doing this, and there he is with the Police Department. Part of the instructions, I guess, I don't know. A few words were exchanged between Steve Duchane and I, but this I'll never forget. Steve Duchane looked at me and he said, "They better do as they promised." I said, "What?" He said, "They better pay for this as they promised." And, I said, "Who?" And, he said, "The newspapers. They better pay for this as promised."

All right. Next day, day later, I don't know, I didn't keep a log. My whole life from then on was turned upside down. We had fax machines. That was about the only electronic extras that people had at that time. I think it was about three or four days later, the Detroit Newspaper Agency had given a check to the City of Sterling Heights for something like \$200,000 for the overtime that the police officers had put in so far. And in their PR, in the Detroit Newspaper Agency's PR, and the City Manager's, the residents, they turned union brother against union brother. Believe me, they did a good job of it. It's called greed. They were blaming the strikers for the money it would cost the City of Sterling Heights for their horrible strike. And this is why we had to accept the money from the Detroit Newspaper Agency to pay for the police officers' overtime. The police officers didn't belong there to begin with, and boy, I got chastised for making that statement. I got chastised. When you folks finally look at those tapes from the Council meetings after the strike had hit, you will see how how anybody who stuck up for workers was ridded out of town on a rail.

VT: Can you tell me a little about some of those early Council meetings?



EA: Oh, they were horrible. Joe Munan and Joyce Fitch. Joyce Snow Fitch, by the way. Joyce Snow Fitch, S-N-O-W is her married name, married to a teacher from Stevenson High School, a history teacher, I think. Or, was he a math teacher, I don't remember, but a teacher, a union teacher, who always spoke ill of the unions, hated the unions, wanted to destroy the unions, gave speech after speech after speech at the Council meetings against unions – her and her little protégé, Jay Pollard, at the time, who sat on Council. I lost my train of thought. Anyway, her, Joe Munan, and of course, the Detroit Newspaper strike [Agency], because the news media just absolutely ... it was the biggest event of the century, it was an absolute circus there, because these strikers were causing all these problems. These strikers weren't causing any problems. The first arrests were ... the first day of the strike ... were for jaywalking. They were for milling, they were for anything they for anything they wanted to make arrests. They made it look bad. Arrests? The police officers would come across the street, they would break through organized picket lines, they would pick out people and they would drag them out and they would arrest them. And, it just, it just escalated. I remember ... Jerry's got the number ... but I think it was ... they tried to get everybody, there was the Sheriff's Department was called, it was horrible, it was just plain horrible.

These Council meetings, the newspaper would come out, they would scream and yell at us, they would tell us that we were costing, the strikers were costing the City money, the Detroit Newspaper Agency had a right to pay for the overtime. I was trying to to to say that the newspapers and union should sit down and bargain in good faith. I even brought forth a legal resolution that the newspapers and the

Detroit Newspaper Agency should bargain in good faith. And, I was told I had no business interfering in the strike.

This was my city. It looked like a war zone. This was my city. I was trying to stop this carnage. To me, it was carnage.

VT: The Detroit Newspaper Agency was present at City Council meetings on a regular basis?

EA: Well, I don't know if they were present at City Council meetings, but they were pulling the strings. Joyce Snow Fitch, S-N-O-W Fitch, F-I-T-C-H, she took an alias as Fitch because her husband belonged to the teacher's union. She was one of the spear-headers to come to the meetings and scream and yell at us, along with Joe Munam. Some of those meetings are a blur. I'd have to re-watch them. When you folks start re-watching them then you can come back and ask me some more questions. But, they were chaotic, they were horrible. I remember at one of the one of the meetings, it was it was so bad, I really thought. Strikers started ... the people on strike started to come, to try to counteract this and they would get on the podium and they would try to talk and they would give their part of what was going on.

I came out of one of the meetings one night, and on the back of a pick-up truck, was a ... what do you call them ... a hanging noose? It was a hanging noose and there was a rope hanging from it. And people were screaming, "This is for you Arnold, this is for you, Councilwoman Arnold!"

I was terrified. My phone was tapped. I had called, at that time, AT&T, my phone was tapped. I found out my phone was tapped. It was chirping. I couldn't figure out why my phone would chirp. I called the

operator and she said to me when a phone does that means it's tapped. She said, "Where do you live?" I told her. She said, "We'll send somebody out." It was tapped in the back yard, it was tapped on Ryan Road in the main box. It was tapped. They took the lines and put the lines where they were supposed to be.

My husband would go to serve his time on the picket line. My phone would ring. I would have some character – they would block the numbers – I would have some character on the other end telling me exactly what he had on, what color his scarf was, and what gate he was at. I would wake up in the middle of the night to loud noises in front of the house and the Huffmaster goons would be sitting out in front of the house. At that time they drove Ford Tauruses and big black Ford Tauruses and pick-up trucks and they would be sitting out there and they would have phones in their hands just for intimidation.

Some of the neighbors were scared. They said would you do something about it. I said, "I can't do anything about it. Who am I going to call, Sterling Heights Police? They're not going to come out for me. You've got to call." Finally they started calling and when they started calling, it started subsiding a little bit.

We were, Jerry and I were eating supper in the middle of the afternoon, and there was a character sitting out in front of the house and he was he had this big ... back then the cameras were really big ... he had this big old camera and he was taping anybody who was coming in and out of the house. We ran him off. He had no business sitting out in front of the house taping me.

I don't know how many times I knew I was followed. I did some very creative driving. I was terrified, but who was I going to complain to?

VT: Do you think other members of the City Council were treated similarly?

EA: One of the ... I don't know if you're going to get an interview from him, I'll give you his name. One of the workers from the .... well, let me put it to you this way. There was city employees that told me that when they showed any kind of sympathy towards the workers, or they went out to the workers and gave them water bottles, or they went out to the workers and gave them a six-pack of Coca-Cola, or they went out to the workers and brought them some sandwiches, the police were filming anybody and everybody that helped them, that happened to come across the street and help the strikers. It was all on their films. They were constantly filming. Constantly. And, some of the city workers told me that their wives were pulled over, given talking-tos, and they were being followed. I cannot and will not give you their names unless they come forward. I don't know if they're still scared, I don't know if they'll come forward. All you're going to have to do is trust me that they told me that. One worker was terrified, yet he would come up to the line periodically with sandwiches and stuff.

VT: That must have been very difficult.

EA: It was very difficult. And let me tell you, the UAW, Communication Workers of America, and the Greater Detroit Building Trades, were awesome, and the Detroit Teachers Union, to name a few. These are the ones that stand out. Came out to the strike line and helped walk picket lines. They made sure that there was water. They made sure there was help. When the strikers were being tear-gassed, I mean, you know, you're being tear-gassed, you've seen it just lately in Occupy Wall Street, they're all sitting there doing nothing, doing absolutely

nothing sitting there being young girls fighting for a cause. And, you know, the United States of America, you feel that this is not the Tienanmen Square in China where a tank is going to roll over you, but I'm beginning to wonder. You saw this with Occupy Wall Street how they send these cities all this money because these people were occupying the parks. You know, they turn the minds of the average person by claiming money -- that's when greed sets in -- which is the biggest bunch of bull that they can throw at the residents. And you get tear-gassed. Why? Because you are walking a picket line? Why? Because you're trying to bring attention that things aren't fair here in the United States? I just -- I don't know.

I'm glad my father didn't live to see this because he fought for the unions. My father fought for the unions. My mother got fired because the whistle blew at [inaudible] Aluminum and she stood up for the union. Her and two other women were the only two that stood up so they fired them on the spot.

So, I come from a long line of union people. I remember one of my dad's union contracts. He was given a fifteen-minute lunch in a ten or twelve hour day. We went to Sears and he bought a black lunch box with a thermos so he could have coffee and a half a sandwich on his fifteen minutes. So, you know unions really, you know they really just ... tear this country apart. Fifteen minute lunch was negotiated with my Dad's plant Detroit Molden Engineering back in nineteen ... I don't know ... fifty, fifty-one.

But, this, you asked the Council meetings. I tried. I had two resolutions. I even ... the second resolution was when they ... I think was my complete demise. I had presented a resolution to Council that,

at that time, Janet Reno investigate the Detroit Newspaper Agency and the unions and make them sit at the bargaining table. Kind of the gist of the resolution. Somewhere in the cleaning of my house, I'm going to find that resolution. And, that's when the wheels started turning against me.

VT: How did the City Council overall respond to these events?

EA: There was only two, Deanna Koski, whose husband was a union person.

VT: Is she still a member ...

EA: She's still a member of Council. She did nothing. She sat there. She sat there like a stone. And, her husband went and cooperated with Jay Pollard as he said, "My wife will get re-elected. He said, well, I can't really repeat the words he said, but he said she had nothing to do with these strikers and yet he was retired from the UAW. Not all union people are good people. That was a piece of work. Mr. Koski is a piece of work and she cooperated with Jay Pollard.

And, of course, the newspaper industry wanted to make sure that their cronies would get back in. She got back in, Jay Pollard got back in. I can't even remember who else. Kim Wiggins got in. I don't remember who the other Council people were that got back in. Romano got back in, or got in. Who are the other two? I don't remember now. Anyways, that can be looked up. That can be looked up.

The day of ... no ... in the meantime ... Andy and Eugene ... they weren't sure about what Andy and Eugene would do. In the meantime, there was this bogus thing put up against Andy and Eugene that they'd taken a bribe. They later proved that they didn't take a bribe. They lost the

election because they were called “the bribery guys.” They never took a bribe. They wanted to make sure that the right ones were eliminated. And, so that was started before the strike, that they were being accused of taking a bribe. They were nice guys and whether they were accused of that or not, I don’t think they would have stood for this nonsense of what was going on on that strike line.

Sam Palazzola was vocal. He could not understand what was going on. Richard Notte ran unopposed, so he got back in. It was made very clear to him after the election that he better mind his Ps and Qs.

VT: I believe it was September 1995, the Council passed an ordinance to prevent residential picketing...

EA: Sure. Yeah. Oh, yeah, Steve Rice got in.

VT: Can you tell me about that?

EA: Well, again...

VT: What motivated that?

EA: What motivated that. In this country we supposedly have the right to peaceful protesting. Well, we ... if you have ... let me put it to you this way. We have protests all the time against family planning clinics. Family planning clinics do more than the so-called Right Wing says that they do abortions. Family planning clinics take care of children, women, even men who are in desperate need of medical care. Now, there’s protests around them all the time. There have been protests in the past against doctors who work at these family planning clinics in front of their homes. Nobody said anything. They’re allowed. Well, in order to try to put the pressure and get these people, get the Detroit

Newspaper Agency to the negotiating table there was people that were supposedly good union people, but who had cut some very good financial deals with the Detroit Newspaper Agency, crossed the line. One of them is Mitch Album and I wouldn't buy his book if it was the last piece of crap that ever hit the pavement. Mitch Album ... I'll go on to him in a minute. Anyways, getting to these neighborhood ... so what these neighborhood protests, Mitch Album's house, he was protested for being a ... as the term is called ... for being a replacement worker or scab. I'm sorry but they're terms given to people that cross picket lines. There was different people that lived in Sterling Heights and they did protest marches around their house to draw attention to other union people that lived down the street or UAW, the Greater Detroit Building Trades, whatever union you happened to belong to. This is wrong. This is a person who walked across the picket line.

So, in the ultimate wisdom of the Council which if they were already ... I mean, come on, they were hand-picked by the Detroit Newspaper Agency. Steve Duchane was still at the helm. They decided that this wasn't very nice. So, we're going to pass an ordinance that you're not allowed to picket in front of somebody's house.

I went to the Council meeting on that one and I said you know what, you're making a big mistake, because someday it was going to be a drug dealer. There's going to be an abortionist that you don't like. You're going to call him an abortionist and you're going to want to picket their home. You're not going to be able to. But, they passed it anyways. See, they only, they pass things when it's convenient for them to pass things against orders. No different than this last election.



I acquaint all of this going down, all of this going down with what's happening today. It was already planned. This was not spontaneous by the Right Wing, by management, by the one-percenters, by the haters of the union. This was already in the works, along with destroying the teachers' union by making academies, and academies are wrong. Schools for profit, they have destroyed ... they send all their work out of town. How do you expect the economy to come back? I don't see the prices any cheaper. I don't see the garment industry any cheaper. They say they're trying to make it cheaper. I don't know. We used to have a choice. We'd go to Walmart's and get stuff that you could wash a half a dozen times, you bought them for your kids and you knew they were going to grow out of them, so you didn't worry about going to Macy's to buy their clothes. And any ... and my grandmother taught me and so did my parents. If you wash things properly, they last forever, no matter where you buy them from. And if you lose a button, you sew it back on.

So, we had the high to the low, the low to the medium. This newspaper strike is the start of it, I really feel between California and Michigan it was the start of it.

VT: I would imagine that residents of Sterling Heights had to be affected in some way whether you were a protester, a striker or ...

EA: What they did with the residents of Sterling Heights ... I even had some of the city workers, I had one worker that I dearly loved, dearly loved this young man. He said to me, "Elaine, we have to take the money from the police officers, because it's going to cost me in my taxes." I said, "Would you stop and smell the coffee? We wouldn't need this money from the Detroit Newspaper Agency. The police had

no business on that island. He said, "All I see is trouble." I said, "Why don't the police go home? You won't see no trouble." They're the ones that are provoking it. In fact one of the comments that the City Manager made to me, on one of the big weekends, he said, "What are those people made out of, Elaine?" And, at that point, I didn't even want to look at him, let alone talk to him and I just stared at him. He said, "I'm asking you a question. What are those people made out of?" I said, "They're tough." He said, "Boy, they sure as hell are." He said, "The cops threw tear gas at them, pepper spray, and everything we could throw at them and they were gagging and throwing up and coughing and coming back for more." He said, "We even turned the fans on them," he said, "and we just couldn't bring them down."

I think it's time that people know the attitude, the attitude against somebody who wants to go on an official strike. That was a quote from the City Manager, "We couldn't bring them down."

