Interviewer: Where were your parents born?

Subject: In Puerto Rico. My father in [unintelligible] and my mother in [unintelligible].

Interviewer: Do your parents currently live in the United States?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: Where do they live now?

Subject: In Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Interviewer: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Subject: Four women and a foster brother.

Interviewer: Were any of the children born in the same town as your parents?

Subject: No. They were all born in Ponce.

Interviewer: What does your father do for a living?

Subject: Insurance salesman.

Interviewer: Has he always had the same job?

Subject: Since 1957.

Interviewer: And before that, where did he work?

Subject: He worked in Alcoa, which is in the dock in Ponce.

Interviewer: What kind of work did he do there?

Subject: Salesman.

Interviewer: And your mother? What kind of work does she do?

Subject: Housewife.

Interviewer: She’s never worked outside of the home?
Subject: Never.

Interviewer: How far did your father get in school?

Subject: Up to second year in college.

Interviewer: What was he studying?

Subject: Law.

Interviewer: Do you know why he dropped out of college?

Subject: Because he got sick and because his job took up too much time.

Interviewer: He worked while he was studying?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: How far did your mother get in school?

Subject: Up to the second year in high school.

Interviewer: After she left school and before she got married, did she work?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: How old was your mother when she got married?

Subject: Fourteen years old.

Interviewer: And did she continue to live in the same house?

Subject: She lived first in Adjuntas for several months and then she moved to Ponce.

Interviewer: Does anybody else live in your home that is not a family member?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: And at some time in the past, has anyone else lived in your home while you were being raised?

Subject: Yes. Three nieces of my mother’s who were orphaned.

Interviewer: How long did they live there?
Subject: Until they got married. And one died.

0:03:31.5

Interviewer: When you were growing, what did they place more importance on: religion, education or that you have a good job?

Subject: On education.

Interviewer: Was it the same for all the children?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. What is your birth order?

0:04:01.0

Subject: I’m the third.

Interviewer: The third. Did your older sisters work before they got married?

Subject: Just one.

Interviewer: What kind of work did she do?

Subject: Saleswoman.

Interviewer: Did they go to school?

Subject: The oldest got to first year of (intermediate) school.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

0:04:29.2

Subject: The next one got to fourth year and the other graduated from secretary school.

Interviewer: They all studied in Ponce?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: At what school did you study at?

Subject: At Ponce High School.

Interviewer: And then?

Subject: [Unintelligible], in Percy School. I spent one year in San German. The Inter Americana
Interviewer: Mm-hm.

0:05:03.7

Subject: Inter-Americana.

Interviewer: And what were you studying?

Subject: I took accounting. At the Inter-Americana I took basic courses. And high school, at which I took basic curriculum.

Interviewer: Very well. In regard to how you were raised, was either of your parents strictly authoritarian?

Subject: No.

0:05:28.2

Interviewer: Who, like they say, wore, or wears, the pants at home?

Subject: Both.

Interviewer: Did your father also place importance on education, or was it more your mother?

Subject: My father.

Interviewer: Are your parents religious?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: What religion do they...?

Subject: Catholic.

Interviewer: Catholic.

0:05:59.2

And do they go to church and everything?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: But they follow those principles?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Were there any incidents while you were in Puerto Rico that you remember that you think were important for your family or for many of your decisions?

Subject: My parents’ divorce.
Interviewer: When did they get divorced?
Subject: Three years ago. They had been married for 32 years.
Interviewer: What was the reason for their divorce?
Subject: Because he married again.
Interviewer: Okay. Is your mother living on her own now?
Subject: With my youngest brother.
Interviewer: And, does your father still live in Ponce?
Subject: Yes.
Interviewer: With her current wife? Does he have other children?
Subject: No.
Interviewer: When did you decide to come to Philadelphia?
Subject: In March, 1975.
Interviewer: Why did you decide to come here?
Subject: Because I had some stress issues and I came on a vacation. I ran into a classmate from school in Ponce and through her I started studying up to now.
Interviewer: Why did you decide to come to Philadelphia specifically?
Subject: Because I knew several people who told me that Philadelphia was a lot quieter than New York.
Interviewer: Who are these people? Friends, family?
Subject: Acquaintances through correspondence.
Interviewer: When you came here, where was the first place you lived?
Subject: The same address I have now.
Interviewer: Did you have any problems when you came here, in terms of settling in?

Subject: It took me a long time to adjust, because I didn’t have any family here, nor do I have any now.

0:08:32.3

And it was the first time I was away from my parents.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. You came here for that reason, and then when was it that you decided to study here?

Subject: Eighteen days after I arrived here.

Interviewer: And what was the procedure you followed to apply to school?

0:09:01.9

Subject: Some people helped me, they guided me. I applied for scholarships and I was accepted.

Interviewer: Are these people from the community?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Or are they specifically friends?

Subject: (Georgie Santiago).

Interviewer: Is this person an active member of the community?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you go to any specific entities or any agency to ask for guidance?

0:09:33.5

Subject: No.

Interviewer: What was the first job you had here?

Subject: In a workshop.

Interviewer: A Puerto Rican workshop?

Subject: Mm-hm.

Interviewer: Why did you come to work here?

Subject: For work study.
Interviewer: Any reason in particular for why you wanted to work in the Puerto Rican workshop?

Subject: I knew a classmate from school who worked here, and she told me about the workshop.

And I wanted to try it.

Interviewer: What did you begin studying when you went to school?

Subject: General studies.

Interviewer: General studies. How long have you been there?

Subject: A year and a half.

Interviewer: How long are you missing to finish?

Subject: About three or four more semesters.

Interviewer: Have you had any problems with discrimination in school?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: No? And in general, have you had any issues with discrimination for being Puerto Rican? Whether it be in school or where you live, etc.?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: No? In what area do you currently live?

Subject: On the West Side.

Interviewer: Would you say that area has a large Puerto Rican community?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: What is the racial mix there? What kind of people live there?

Subject: Italians. Arabs. And several Puerto Ricans.

Interviewer: Are there Hispanic businesses close to where you live?
Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Like which ones?

Subject: There’s a supermarket. There’s a furniture shore.

Interviewer: Are they tended by Puerto Ricans?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Do they also live in the area?

Subject: No. There are some Puerto Rican Arabs

0:12:00.6

Interviewer: Okay. When you were in Puerto Rico, did you work?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: What kind of work did you do?

Subject: I worked at a travel agency. I worked in a (general labor) company. I worked at my father’s company, processing vacation time. And I worked as a private investigator.

0:12:29.2

Interviewer: Have you ever been in a protest or a strike?

Subject: No, neither one.

Interviewer: Did you belong to a union?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: When you were starting college, what did you want to do with your life in the future?

Subject: Doctor.

Interviewer: Why are you not inclined towards that profession at this moment?

0:12:59.7

Subject: Because I was sick for several years. A lot of things happened and I had problems that I wasn’t anticipating.

Interviewer: What kind of illness did you have?

Subject: I had about five surgeries in two years.
Interviewer: For an illness you have?
Subject: My intestines.

Interviewer: Would you currently like to leave this job to find a better job?
Subject: No.

Interviewer: When you finish school, what is it you’re thinking of doing?
Subject: I plan on being in Philadelphia for about two more years and then finish my degree in Spain.

Interviewer: When you finish in Spain, what do you plan on doing?
Subject: Return to the United States.

Interviewer: Have you ever thought about returning to Puerto Rico?
Subject: No.

Interviewer: During the time that you’ve been here in Philadelphia, have you been to Puerto Rico to visit?
Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: For how long?
Subject: On two occasions.

Interviewer: When you go, where do you stay?
Subject: With my mother in Ponce.

Interviewer: In Ponce? When you worked and lived at home, did you contribute from the money you earned to support the family?
Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: What percentage of your salary did you give?
Subject: Half.
Interviewer: Did you do it because it felt good to do it or because your parents required it of you?

Subject: No, I did it because I wanted to. My parents never forced me to do anything.

Interviewer: Do you currently feel that you’re working towards a successful career?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that you could change your mind and want to study something else in the future?

Subject: I don’t think so.

Interviewer: So, you’re happy with what you’re studying?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: What made you decide to study that when you had in mind to study something else and for the reasons you told me you didn’t do it? Why did you study specifically what you’re studying now?

Subject: Because I like it.

Interviewer: Who gave you the idea to study that area?

Subject: No one.

Interviewer: And how did you find out about it? Did you read about it? Or do you know someone who has that profession?

Subject: No, because I like to help the sick, I like to help other people.

Interviewer: What kind of work are you doing now at the workshop?

Subject: Accounting

Interviewer: Is that what you’re studying?

Subject: No. I studied that in Puerto Rico.
Interviewer: When you finish, what kind of work will you do?
Subject: When I finish my degree?
Interviewer: Yes.
Subject: I still don’t know.
Interviewer: But what you’re studying now, what area is it focused on?
Subject: Medicine.
Interviewer: How many more years will you have to study in order to finish?
Subject: Like four more years.

Interviewer: And are you planning on going to a specific place in Spain?
Subject: To Seville.
Interviewer: Have you looked for information regarding this?
Subject: No, but I’ve received guidance.
Interviewer: Someone in particular, or an agency?
Subject: A teacher at school.
Interviewer: And what is this specialty called? The one you’re going to study in Spain.

Interviewer: And when they got divorced, did it affect you all negatively?
Subject: Our attitude towards him.
Interviewer: In what way? In what way?
Subject: That we couldn’t accept that they were getting a divorce.
Interviewer: Did you mention it like that?
Subject: Mmm?
Interviewer: Did you mention that before they got a divorce?
Subject: The thing is we found out when they were already divorced.
Interviewer: But hadn’t anything happened that you could have noticed?
Subject: No, because my mother got sick.

0:18:30.0
She got a nervous depression.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.
Subject: And she was in her room for a month. So, the doctor, according to my father, recommended that she go to another country for several months to see if she could recover. She came to the United States, to New York, (a year ago), and my father filed the divorce papers and since she didn’t contest, they granted him the divorce.

0:19:00.1
Interviewer: And as soon as the divorce went through, your father left the home?
Subject: He had already left.

Interviewer: What kind of a relationship do you currently have with your father?
Subject: Mine is regular.

Interviewer: And the other children?
Subject: Regular, as well.

0:19:29.5
Interviewer: Do you visit your father?
Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you still feel closer to your mother? I mean to your father.
Subject: Yes...
Interviewer: While your father worked as a salesman, did he spend long periods of time outside the home?

Subject: He worked on the island and when he had to attend conferences for the company,…

0:20:02.1

…he travelled to Aruba, to Venezuela, to Las Vegas, Nevada. But he was away for eight or 15 days only.

Interviewer: During the time when your father wasn’t working, did he spend time with you?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that at some point you have sacrificed your own aspirations in order to satisfy your family’s?

0:20:32.9

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: In what way?

Subject: In Puerto Rico I stopped studying in order to work so that I could get to work and be able to help my family.

Interviewer: When this happened, did this happen because there was a specific problem in your home?

Subject: Yes. One time there were some financial problems.

0:20:59.4

Interviewer: Was this financial problem due to some …?

Subject: My father.

Interviewer: Very well. It wasn’t because a business shutdown or something like that happened in Puerto Rico?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: Which of your parents wanted you to work?

0:21:30.0

Subject: Neither one. The thing is that when I saw the situation, I decided to work.

Interviewer: How old were you?
Subject: Sixteen years old.

Interviewer: How long did you work?

Subject: I worked for one year full-time and then I worked part-time and studied. I paid for my own schooling, from the money I made from work.

0:21:58.5

Interviewer: And was that the first job you ever had? How old are you now?

Subject: Twenty-seven years old.

Interviewer: And how many different types of jobs have you had?

Subject: Four.

Interviewer: Which one has satisfied you the most?

Subject: When I worked as an accounting assistant.

0:22:30.2

Interviewer: In what place?

Subject: In Ponce.

Interviewer: At any time have you earned more money than what your father was making?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you plan of continuing to live in the place you now live?

0:22:58.8

Subject: Up to now.

Interviewer: Are you satisfied with the place you live in?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you live near your job?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: How do you get from your work to here?

Subject: On the bus or trolley.

Interviewer: Is the reason you live where you do related to the fact that it's close to your work?
Subject: No.

Interviewer: Why do you live there?

Subject: I’ve lived there since I arrived from Puerto Rico.

Interviewer: What kind of food is cooked at your house?

Subject: Creole food.

Interviewer: What kind of food? What did you have for dinner last night, for example?

Subject: Rice with beans, meat.

Interviewer: Do you ever cook what people refer to as American food?

Subject: No. Never.

Interviewer: Where do you shop?

Subject: At the store by my house.

Interviewer: And they sell Hispanic food there?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Exclusively?

Subject: No. All kinds.

Interviewer: What kinds of restaurants do you go to?

Subject: Hispanic and several times, American.

Interviewer: But what is your preference.

Subject: Hispanic.

Interviewer: Okay. If for whatever reason the police arrested you, who would you call first?

Subject: (Georgie) Santiago.
Interviewer: For what reason?

Subject: He's like my brother. He's the only person I'm close to here in Philadelphia.

Interviewer: Did you know him before coming to Philadelphia?

Subject: No. I met him through correspondence.

Interviewer: Did someone refer him to you to write to him?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Are you single or married or divorced?

Subject: Divorced.

Interviewer: When did you get married?

Subject: In November, '72.

Interviewer: And did you get married in...?

Subject: In a church.

Interviewer: In a church? Did the young man you married live in the same part where you lived?

Subject: From Ponce.

Interviewer: And how did you meet?

Subject: We met at a show in a hotel.

Interviewer: And how long did you date before you got married?

Subject: About two years.

Interviewer: Was it a formal relationship?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Did he visit your home?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Did they accept him in your home as your boyfriend?
They accepted him, but they didn’t like him very much.

For what reason?

I don’t know.

During that time, what did he do? Did he study or work?

He worked.

What kind of job did he have?

He worked at a hardware store.

How far did he go in school?

Up to fourth year.

Did he have plans to study further?

No.

How long were you married?

Three years.

And for what reason did you get divorced?

We didn’t understand each other.

And were those three years of marriage...?

Terrible.

Terrible? Do you have children?

No.

Do you think you’ll get married again?

No.

Did that influence your decision to come here?
Subject: Yes.
Interviewer: So, would you say your divorce also affected you?
Subject: Also, yes.
Interviewer: Your divorce. Did you think you would be married for a long time?
Subject: Forever.
Interviewer: And was your relationship before you got married good?
Subject: Normal.
Interviewer: Does your husband still live in Puerto Rico?
Subject: Mm-hm.
Interviewer: Do you communicate at all?
Subject: No.
Interviewer: Did he get married again?
Subject: I don’t know.
Interviewer: Do you believe in spiritualism or Spiritism?
Subject: No.
Interviewer: Have you ever visited a botanica?
Subject: I’ve been to one.
Interviewer: For what reason?
Subject: To buy candles.
Interviewer: For what reason do you light candles?
Subject: Because I believe in San Judas Thaddeus and I light candles for him.
Interviewer: When do you light a candle?
Subject: Not usually. Just sometimes.
Interviewer: For a specific reason in mind?
Subject: No.

Interviewer: Okay. What kind of holidays do you celebrate?
Subject: None.

Interviewer: But are there any holidays that you believe in, during the year?
Subject: December 31.

Interviewer: Do you celebrate Christmas?
Subject: No.

Interviewer: Do you know about any tales or proverbs that are characteristic of Puerto Rico?

Interviewer: Any others?

Subject: The early bird gets the worm.

Interviewer: Do you know any tales of those that grandmothers sometimes tell of things that have happened in the town and that continue to be told?

Subject: Yes.

I remember that once my mother told me about a woman that was from her same town. She suffered an attack and she was unconscious for three days and apparently everyone thought she was dead. When they went to bury her, she came back to life. My mother says that in the olden times, since there wasn’t the medicine there is today...

...they used to have some strokes. And then the woman lived for many more years.

Interviewer: What do you think about marriages between Puerto Ricans and people who are not Puerto Rican?

Subject: Hard that they understand each other.
Interviewer: Do you know any marriage like that?
Subject: My sisters are married to Cubans.

Interviewer: Does anybody in your family live in the United States.
Subject: Yes. I have family in New York.

Interviewer: And your sisters? Your sisters, where do they live?
Subject: In Puerto Rico.

Interviewer: Do they still live in Ponce?
Subject: Ponce. One lives in Ponce and the other in San Juan.

Interviewer: Are the other sisters married?
Subject: No. I just have two sisters that are married.

Interviewer: And the one that is single lives...?
Subject: With my mother.

Interviewer: With your mother. Are your sisters’ marriages good?
Subject: Good.

Interviewer: Do they have children?
Subject: Yes. One has three girls and the other has an adopted child, plus three that she had, so four.

Interviewer: What language is generally spoken in your home?
Subject: Spanish.

Interviewer: In what language are you more fluent?
Subject: Spanish.

Interviewer: In Spanish. What kind of music do you listen to?
Subject: Latin music.
Interviewer: For example, what kind?
Subject: Old music.
Interviewer: From what composers?

0:32:29.2

Subject: I like Los Panchos, Los Conde. In modern music, I like (Danny Rivera), (Sophy). I don’t like salsa.
Interviewer: What kind of music do you dance?
Subject: Any kind.
Interviewer: Do you go to entertainment centers here in Philadelphia?
Subject: Depending on whether or not there’s an event. Only then do I go.
Interviewer: And are all the activities you go to are hosted by the Hispanic community?

0:33:02.3

Subject: Yes.
Interviewer: What do you think about the Hispanic community here in Philadelphia?
Subject: That some are well-organized and others are not.
Interviewer: Do you feel comfortable within the Puerto Rican community?
Subject: Yes.
Interviewer: Have you ever tried to go beyond this community with people who are not Hispanic?
Subject: No.

0:33:29.4

Interviewer: Do you go to any other place that is not Hispanic?
Subject: No.
Interviewer: Do you have any friends here in your neighborhood that you know from Puerto Rico?
Subject: Yes.
Interviewer: Many or few?
Subject: One person.

Interviewer: And you knew this person from the town where you lived?
Subject: Yes.

0:34:00.2

Interviewer: At some point while you’ve been here, have you been to Puerto Rico with the desire to stay there permanently?
Subject: No.

Interviewer: If you were given the opportunity to come here again, would you come here again?
Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: How old were you when you left your family to live in your own home?

0:34:31.0

Subject: Twenty-three.

Interviewer: After you got divorced, did you return to your parents’ home?
Subject: No. I had an apartment.

Interviewer: Did you live in Ponce?
Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Have you ever been without work? Unemployed?
Subject: No.

0:35:00.8

Interviewer: Which one of your sisters was born first?
Subject: (Mary).

Interviewer: In what year was she born?
Subject: In ‘44.

Interviewer: And the last one?
Subject: In ‘57.

Interviewer: Do any of your older sisters work?
0:35:31.3

Subject: No.

Interviewer: Have they ever worked?

Subject: One of them.

Interviewer: What kind of work did she do?

Subject: Saleswoman.

Interviewer: At what age did she start working?

Subject: When she was around 29 she worked for just a couple of months.

Interviewer: Were your sisters also given the choice of being able to study?

Subject: Yes. But they chose not to.

0:35:58.2

Interviewer: Would your parents have paid for their studies?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: What did your mother think that a girl should do at home?

Subject: Do the house chores.

Interviewer: And what did she think that a woman should do in life?

Subject: Have a degree or a home.

Interviewer: Which one did she place more importance on?

0:36:29.6

Subject: Both.

Interviewer: At what age did you start contributing with or doing chores in your home?

Subject: Since I was eleven years old.

Interviewer: And specifically, what chores did you do?

Subject: I mopped. I swept. I cooked.

Interviewer: Was it important for you to get married and have a family?
Subject: No.
Interviewer: For what reasons did you do it?
Subject: Because of the problems that there were in my house.
Interviewer: While you were in your house, would you have liked to live in a different place?
Subject: No.
Interviewer: When you were young, what person did you admire the most?
Subject: My grandmother.
Interviewer: For what reason?
Subject: Because she lived with my mother, since my mother married my father.

0:37:31.8
She helped my mother raise me.
Interviewer: Did you live at any time with her?
Subject: She has always lived with us.
Interviewer: At any point have you felt embarrassed of what you are?
Subject: No.

0:37:59.4
Interviewer: Were any of your sisters born in your house?
Subject: No.
Interviewer: Where were they born?
Subject: In hospitals.
Interviewer: While you were married, did you work?
Subject: Yes.
Interviewer: And after you got divorced, did you continue working in the same place?
Subject: I came here to Philadelphia.
Interviewer: In what ways did you find work in Puerto Rico?

Subject: Just looking for it.

Interviewer: In any agency in particular?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: When you were married, did your husband also work?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Was he out of the house for many hours each day?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: As part of his job?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: What was your biggest difficulty in your marriage?

Subject: That we didn't understand each other.

Interviewer: Is there a specific incident or incidents that affected the marriage?

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that?

Subject: No.

Interviewer: Who took care of the finances when you were married?

Subject: Both of us.

Interviewer: How much money did you and your husband save each month?

Subject: About 100 pesos.

Interviewer: And what did you save it for?

Subject: We had it in the bank for whatever emergency might arise.
1961A English Translation

Interviewer: Did you have a plan regarding your income and how you were going to invest it?

Subject: Yes.

0:40:00.4

Interviewer: A budget. Who dealt with the money?

Subject: I did.

Interviewer: If you had had children, what kind of jobs would you have liked for your children?

Subject: Whatever they liked.

Interviewer: What value would be more important for you with your children? That they work hard, religion, education or that they have a good degree?

Subject: A good degree.

0:40:30.6

Interviewer: The same for a son, as for a daughter?

Subject: Yes. [Unintelligible].