

# **AN INTERVIEW WITH NYMPHA COMACCHIO**

An Oral History Conducted by Stefani Evans and Cecilia Winchell

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Reflections: The Las Vegas Asian American and Pacific Islander  
Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center at UNLV  
University Libraries  
University of Nevada Las Vegas

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Oral History Project

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Produced by: The Oral History Research Center at UNLV – University Libraries  
Director: Claytee D. White  
Project Manager: Stefani Evans  
Transcriber: Kristin Hicks  
Editors and Project Assistants: Vanessa Concepcion, Kristel Peralta, Jerwin Tiu, Cecilia  
Winchell, Ayrton Yamaguchi

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The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of Reflections: The Las Vegas Asian American and Pacific Islanders Oral History Project.

Claytee D. White  
Director, Oral History Research Center  
University Libraries  
University of Nevada Las Vegas

## PREFACE



“I want to sacrifice to make our family better, to lift them up”

Born in the Philippines as the oldest of a family of nine children, Nympha Comacchio knew the burden of responsibility from a very young age. After attending elementary school, Comacchio immediately went to work on her father's lumber farm, performing demanding manual labor until she was 17. Afterwards, she found a job as a seamstress in Manila and would send most of her paychecks back home to her mom to help support the rest of her family. It was in Manila where she met her first husband with whom she had her first son with but was soon separated when he was only three so that she could continue working in Saudi Arabia for better pay.

Through an agency, she found a job babysitting for a doctor's family in Saudi Arabia, where she worked as a live-in nanny in an American community. During this time, she describes only being able to go see cartoons at the movie theater and having to wear an abaya that covered her entire body every time she went out. However, it was through this doctor that she was able to receive a student visa to finally immigrate to the United States, where she first landed in California and continued to babysit. Eventually, after meeting her second husband and hearing about the cheap housing prices in Las Vegas while on vacation, the couple would go on to purchase a house in the city in 2000 to live in. After briefly working for the New Frontier Hotel and Casino, Comacchio began working for the Wynn and Encore, where she found out about the Culinary Union and became more active. To this day, she continues to work as a housekeeper while serving as an organizer in the union that oversees several different properties. Throughout

the rest of the interview, Comacchio touches on the responsibilities of being a housekeeper, the current challenges that they face, the food she is most strongly connected to, and how she feels about the growing AAPI population in southern Nevada.

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in Las Vegas, Nevada  
Conducted by Cecilia Winchell

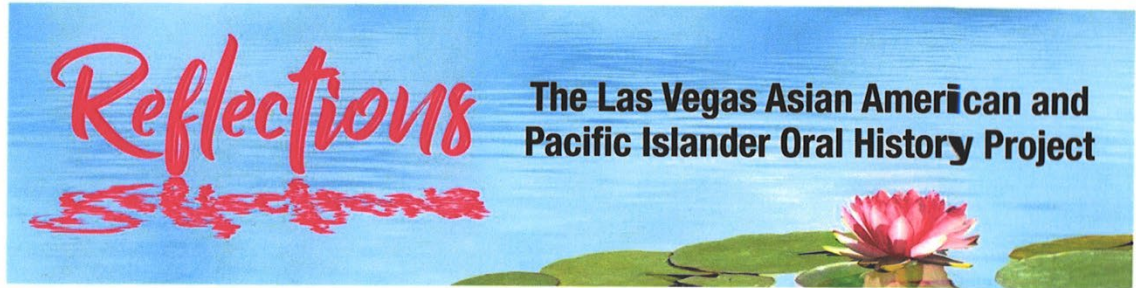
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Nympha Comacchio begins with her middle class childhood in the Philippines and recalls memories such as making her own toys and the fruits her grandparents would grow. As the oldest child of a large family, she had to forfeit her education in order to help her dad on the farm and provide her family. This would be the reason why she ended up working in Manila, experiencing a different culture and lifestyle while sending money to her mom. Comacchio continues to discuss food, holidays, and how she met her first husband who was from Saudi Arabia. After having her first son, she was motivated by the challenge to give her son a better life, and discusses the process of immigrating to Saudi Arabia and working there.....1-5

Eventually, Comacchio’s time as a live-in nanny resulted in her immigration to the United States when the doctor she worked for decided to move back. Although it took a long time, it would start the path of her reunification with her son. Her first stop in the US was California, where she stayed for four years before meeting her second husband and getting married. She describes how they got the idea to move to Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2000 and how she has seen the city change. Comacchio details the various jobs she has worked since moving to Las Vegas, how she found out about the Culinary Union, and what her current role encompasses.....5-11

Comacchio discusses the various forms of discrimination she has experienced and details the process of what it is like to clean a room. She notes the emerging problems surrounding how much time she has to clean rooms, given new policies preventing daily cleaning. These issues include the burden it puts on housekeepers to finish their rooms, getting write-ups for not being able to finish, and the physical problems it has caused. Comacchio talks about how her role as an organizer plays into helping workers and the various policies the union is currently fighting against...11-17

Comacchio lists the properties she is in charge of on the union side, including everything from the airport to the Circa Hotel. She circles back to her happiest foods that her dad used to make, as well as tracing some family history. Comacchio succeeding bringing her son to the US by the time he was sixteen, and he is now currently in the process of his own family in the Philippines. She talks about putting several people in her family through nursing school, which was her own dream. She wraps up by talking about her experience in Saudi Arabia and what the significance of the AAPI community as the fastest-growing segment of the Southern Nevada population.....17-23



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Nympha Comacchio 5/6/2022  
Signature of Narrator Date

Cecilia Winchell 5/19/2022  
Signature of Interviewer Date

**Good morning. Today's date is May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022. My name is Cecilia Winchell. I'm here with Stefani Evans and Nympha Comacchio.**

**Nympha, may you please spell your first and last name for the record?**

The first name is Nympha, N-Y-M-P-H-A. Last name is Comacchio, C-O-M-A-C-C-H-I-O.

**Thank you. The first question, if you could just tell us about your childhood, where you grew up, your family, what you did for fun, everything like that.**

I grew up in the Philippines. Of course, we are not rich. We are middle class. Mostly, it's called a province. We grew up in the province. Of course, at the time it's really poor, so most likely we grow up like make your own toys. From the coconut things, making—how you say that, like shaking, making noise?

**Like maracas?**

Yes, and that's how we build our toys and, also, to make the doll. You take off the coconut things to make a doll. We grew up with a poor place, but thank God, we're still alive, right?

**Of course. Do you have any memories of your grandparents?**

My grandparents, yes, I still have memory of my grandparents. They lived in a different province they call east Tarlac, so they speak a different language, also. I always remember my grandma and my grandpa because how the fruit grew by seasonal. They call it star apple. When they harvest the fruit, they have to bring some to us. You cannot forget about that.

**What kind of fruits did they bring?**

They call it star apple.

**SE: Star apple?**

Yes, they call it star apple. They call it star apple.

**SE: Is that the one that you cut it in half, and it's the shape of a star?**



No, in our language they call it *caimito*, but in English, they call it star apple. It's round, and when you cut it, it's white inside with black seeds in it.

**CW: What did your parents do for a living?**

My dad was a farmer and, also, do lumber. Selling only lumber, only wood. But farmer at the time I was growing up; he was on the farm.

**And your mom?**

Mom is, of course, housewife because she has a lot of children. We're nine, the family.

**Could you tell us a little bit about your siblings?**

Yes. I'm the oldest one. I have five brothers and four sisters. I'm the oldest one. Of course, I have to help my parents through the childhood. I never had those class things for the kids because it was a lot of children and, also, my dad getting sick at that time, and I have to help provide for my parents. That's why at that time I did not go to the school. I got only for five grades in the Philippines. I didn't go graduate high school, no. I helped my dad.

**What did you do to help him?**

Go to the farm, cutting the grass, or doing something to help.

**How long did you spend helping your father at the farm?**

A long time. I was still seventeen years old at that time. When I start enough to understand growing up, I'm eighteen years old, twenty-one years old; I have to go to another place close to Manila to sew clothes with my grandma's sister.

**What was it like working in Manila?**

It's totally different. Of course, you can see the different people, different cultures, how to dress up the people because to grow up on the farm is totally different. You can see between you and the other children, it's different. Of course, we make more money. I sent it to my mom.

**What kind of foods did you eat where you grew up?**

It's like dry fish, and then they cook when they kill a chicken. We have organic chicken, of course. They cook with a soup, like sour soup, *Tamarindo*. That's how they always cook. They cook different variety, but most is organic.

**What holidays did your family celebrate?**

We celebrate Christmas, New Year, and sometimes a birthday, of course. The birthdays depend also because now that time you never see the cake and ice cream.

**How long did you work in Manila?**

I work in Manila sewing clothes about six years.

**What did you do afterwards?**

I got my husband. I got married young. I married very young. I was only twenty-six years old.

**How did you meet your husband?**

In Manila, too.

**What does he do?**

My husband came from Saudi Arabia. Of course, everybody has a dream, to make better. My dream is finding a guy that can be a better life, but it's luck because I have a child from him. That is good luck for me. But anyway, we separate.

**After you met your ex-husband, what did you do?**

We stay for only three years because he was an immigrant from another country, and he left me. Since that, I take a challenge to get my son a better life. I went to immigrate to Saudi Arabia, also.

**Really?**

Yes. I take him as a child because he left my son and I for three years. My son is three years old. He didn't come back.

**Why did you choose to immigrate to Saudi Arabia?**

Because it's the only way to make money so I can support my son. Also, I take a challenge; if you can do this to me, I will do the same thing. I showed you what I can do.

**What was that process like? What did it take for you to do to immigrate there?**

It took us a couple of months. You've got to work with an agency. Actually, the agency is the one making money. I have to be babysitter. That is the hard part; you raise other children, and you cannot raise your own children. That is the hard part.

**SE: Who took care of your son?**

My mom.

**SE: Did your mom go with you to—oh, you had to leave your son.**

I had to leave my son to my mom. I have to make money. I have to go full working.

**SE: Oh, that had to be heartbreaking.**

That is the big, big challenge for me. You're raising other children, and you cannot raise your own child. That is good for me because that's why I always have a way. When I immigrated to Saudi Arabia, I find this agency to bring me to Saudi Arabia. This doctor I worked for is a pediatrician doctor, but she studied here in United States. She is the one that brought me here.

**Your employer brought you here.**

Yes. She had two boys, and I had one boy, and almost the same age.

**CW: You met her in Saudi Arabia, right?**

Yes.

**Did she come here with you?**

That's the reason I came over here. She's already a pediatrician doctor, and the company is Aramco. They send her to school to study for the kidney dialysis for the children, and she has, I think, four years to study, so she is looking for a babysitter to bring over here. But they said they could not promise me anything because Philippine people, it's too hard to bring to the United States. They cannot guarantee me on anything. But God has always plan. She brought me in Riyadh. We have to travel about ten hours by car. And the same thing, they gave me a visa. Everybody in nursing is lying. They're lying and saying, "Oh no, you're not going to get it because it's too hard to get the visa." They apply for a student visa for me to go babysit her children. But God always has a plan. I had the same visa in the same day.

**SE: Now, what about your son?**

My son now is thirty-two years old. I have two grandbabies, and she's pregnant. My blessings are...yes. But the sacrifice I did, it's good because when the doctor brought me here, I have a chance to send my two sisters to school to be a nurse and, also, plus my son. That is a good sacrifice I did. I didn't go to school, but I made them sure they cannot be the same like me. Until this day, I'd like to be a nurse. This is my dream.

**CW: When you arrived in the United States, where did you first live?**

I lived in California, Ventura Boulevard and Topanga Canyon, with my employer. I babysat her children for four years.

**You were a live-in.**

Yes, twenty-four-seven nanny.

**Did you bring your son when you first came?**

No.

**When were you able to be reunited with your son?**

Sixteen years later. Sixteen years later. I cannot bring him over here right away because my visa is tourist visa until I got someone to support me and get married and petition my own son.

Immigration is not friendly with us.

**You lived with them for four years, and then what did you do afterwards?**

After that I find my husband. I married my husband. She asked me, "I'm going back to Saudi Arabia. If you want to stay, you can stay, but I want to be for sure the man is going to be a good man. He's not going to be abusing or something, to be sure." They don't leave until I get married to be really sure we can trust him, because they treat me like I'm a sister.

**Are you still in contact with the doctor?**

Yes.

**And she's still in Saudi Arabia?**

No. She came back here. She is a head doctor now in Sacramento.

**After you married your second husband, what did you do? Did you work?**

Yes, I work in California under the table because we don't have right away the paper. I was a student visa, and after that they went back, no more. Now I have to work with somebody under the table, cleaning house or babysitter, like that.

**Was it a student visa or tourist visa?**

The one they got me is a student visa. But every year, they have to renew the visa. Because they know I'm going to be babysitting only for four years, it has to go back, and I met my husband.

**SE: How did you meet your husband?**

In the laundry room doing laundry. You are from Saudi Arabia to here, your clothes is not the same, and you have accent. My husband come and say, "I bet you have a lot of children." I say,

“No. I have one. I have two, but it’s not mine, I’m babysitter.” That’s what started the conversation.

**SE: What did he do?**

My husband is retired.

**Was he retired when you met him?**

Yes. He’s old enough for me, but he does not look old, though. He is old. There is a big gap difference. But he was a good guy. I lost him in 2015. We had been married for twenty-six years.

**CW: What year did you arrive in the U.S.?**

I don’t remember now. My son is thirty-one years. I left my son to mom at three years old, and I came to Saudi Arabia, back. I’m living here in Nevada twenty-two years, so maybe about twenty-nine years. From twenty-nine years, how many years back?

**Ninety-one.**

Maybe ninety-two, ’93, something like that. Yes, because now my son is thirty-two.

**How did you end up moving to Las Vegas?**

My husband and I came for vacation over here, just for vacation, and we stayed at the Hilton Casino. We were eating in the restaurant, and they’re talking about the housing, it’s cheap house. But at that time, I was trying to bring my son, and in California, we live in a one-bedroom condominium. I cannot afford to stay. I said, “We have to buy a house or something.” We looked for a house over there. It’s like five hundred, seven hundred thousand at that time, and over here they’re talking about a hundred thousand, a hundred twenty. I was like, “They’re real, right?” When the two couples left, we asked the guy if they could give us also a tour to look for a house. By the time it’s 2000, we’re not planning to buy a house here, and we find a house.

**SE: That was in 2000?**

Yes, 2000. It's a hundred and sixty-eight thousand I bought my house. Now it's like...I can see the entire Las Vegas, my house where it sit up, because nobody can build.

**CW: That's awesome. What part of town is it in?**

Summerlin, north Summerlin.

**Have you moved since then, or are you still living in that house?**

I'm still living in the house, yes, for twenty-two years. October is twenty-two years.

**How have you seen Las Vegas change since you've moved here?**

Oh, a lot, a lot. When we come over here in 2000, the area where I live, there's no Red Rock, no school, no nothing. From my house to come to the hotel that I was working, the New Frontier, it took me fifteen minutes from my house, and I'm there. Right now, I need forty-five minutes.

Traffic everywhere. It changed a lot.

**When you first got here, who did you work for?**

They have a hotel name called the New Frontier. That's historical now because in the '90s they have a strike. When I came over here, that strike is over, and I start to work with them. It's called the New Frontier.

**What did you do?**

I was casino porter, and I didn't like it, of course, because at that time the bathroom is not flushable. You have to flush it. It's not automatic. It has to be manual. I didn't like it because people...it's nasty. I said, "No, I don't want to be casino porter anymore." I went to the housekeeping job. It's much better. I did a housekeeping job.

**Have you been there ever since you moved here, since 2000? Have you continued to do that job?**

Yes. In 2007, they knock down the hotel, and then they have Encore right across the street. At that time, it's only Encore. Then they build another one. I worked with them for a couple of years for both properties, housekeeping.

**What was your first impression when you first got to Las Vegas?**

The first impression for me is just get the job because I don't have no clue how to get a job. I know how to work in the department, clean the glass, do this one. To clean the room, I don't have no clue. I don't have no idea when I'm applying for casino porter. Just broom it, right. I say, okay, it's an easy job. Housekeeping is different. You have to fold the towel. You have to make the bed. When they're interviewing me, they said, "Do you know how to clean the house? Do you have experience?" Of course, I said, "Yes," because I clean my own house. It's totally different.

In that time, the union had Culinary Training Academy. It's not like now what they have. It's a small building. They have two floors. I took a training for two weeks how to clean, how to put the towel, the trash. That's why I joined the union at that time. I know a little about the union.

**How did you find out about the union?**

When I get the job to the hotel.

**The hotel told you?**

No. The coworkers told me, "You have to go to the rally. You have a union." I said, "Huh-uh, I'm not going there," because I don't have no knowledge about those things. When I work at the Frontier, I don't have knowledge about the union. I came to be knowledgeable when I work in the Wynn and Encore, about the union.

**Would you say that most of your coworkers were in the union?**



Yes, because housekeeping has a union.

**SE: So, you didn't join the union until you went to the Wynn and Encore.**

Yes.

**You worked at the New Frontier for seven years?**

Yes, but I joined the union. I'm a union member because I pay the dues, but I don't have no knowledge about the union until I came there. Somebody put in my head something.

**How did that happen?**

They were inviting me to go to the party. Like I say, "Hey, you have a party." I said, "What is a party?" I thought they were joking saying going to the party. I said, "What kind of party? Are we going to go in the street?" I said, "No, I'm not going."

They're talking about party, but it's a rally. They invited me to the rally. It's still a time when I don't get it. One of the organizers said, "Why are you guys saying that to her? She doesn't believe about the union. I'm going to do a house visit with you, and we can explain it to you better. Over here, you don't focus. You don't pay attention to me." They came to my house to house visit me. That's why I have knowledge about the union. They said, "If you don't have no union, you don't have this, this. To have a union, do you like to have a retirement like your husband?" I said, "You're right." That's why I came to be involved with the union, somebody gave me the knowledge about how the union is. I'm going to have a pension. I'm going to have insurance. I'm going to have a work guarantee. I'm going to have a free meal. They don't give it to you just like that. Somebody fought for that. They started believing it.

**CW: What do you do with the union now? What is your role with the union?**

I'm an organizer now.

**CW: And what does that mean? What does that specifically involve?**

Our goal now is, say you go to the hotel, talking to the workers. Be sure they're following their contract, and nobody is abusing the workers. Management is the best organizer to be lying for the workers. To be sure our member is taken care of.

**Have you experienced any form of racial discrimination in your time working in Las Vegas?**

I don't know if I can say that. Because I'm housekeeping, I don't see discrimination because every job is hard, but specifically the housekeeping said, "Sometimes customers tell you, 'Do you understand what I'm talking about to you? Do you understand what I'm saying?'" Either you understand in your head, but because you're working, you're not going to say...The way they approach you is different. I don't know if it's considered to be discrimination about that. I think it's how you express it.

**SE: You think it's more discrimination against the job that you're doing, or you as a person?**

I think it's about the job, no respect. As a different classification, they don't talk to you like that. As housekeeping, they don't respect you, say, if I have a server or casino porter or cook, whatever. When you're making food for them or want to have this and that, but it's approach. The customers say, "Do you understand? Do you understand what I'm saying?" It's a totally different approach. I think it's about the job, not respect the same. That's why in housekeeping, the manager, I always give a hard time and say, "I can do your job. I can learn it. I want to know if you can do my job." I always say that. It's a hard job.

**SE: Can you tell us how your day is? You walk into a room. What is the first thing you do? When you walk into a room to do your job, tell us what you do first.**

When you go walk to the room, you knock on the door. At that time, you have to knock. Now they have it fancy because now they have a doorbell. Now you have to knock the door. If the customer is there, they'll open the door. If it's not, just go inside the room. Put the light on. Look at the room because you want to be sure if somebody is there or not. Sometimes you can see the room is so nasty that you don't know which part to start. It looks like a tornado. It's everywhere. As the word in the wheel and anchor, if you find the shoes over there, you have to look where is the other pair of the shoes. You have to put them together in order. If the pajamas over here, you have to fold it, underwear. Put everything like that. That's what your employer wants you to do.

**Do you start in one corner and work your way around, or do you start in the middle, or is each room different?**

Each housekeeper is different how they do their job, what is the easier way for them. Like me, when I start a job, I start first in the living room. If they have a table, I clean the living room, and then go do the bed. The last for me is to clean the bathroom. You cannot just like—living room, make the bed, and go to the bathroom to clean it. Amazing, these ladies, and you can see the paper, how many days they're going to be there. Sometimes they have freaking two luggage. They have a pen and paper, and they're writing down with the lipstick on the mirror. That's how hard housekeeping is.

**How much time do you have for each room?**

The time is better, but now it's worse. The time is better because the time, you combine husband and wife in one room. That's why our people is complaining now because it's not the same, totally changed a lot in the housekeeping environment. It's not the same. Before, I can clean the room for forty-five minutes. Check out, I can clean that. Not these days because the company also is not requiring to clean the room every day. If I clean this room every day, it took me

maybe forty-five minutes. If this room I didn't clean every day, it took me one hour and twenty-five minutes. They want to have quality, and they want to have quantity. It's not going to happen. Back the years is better than now.

**Is there a quota of rooms you have to clean each day?**

Yes, I have twelve.

**Twelve rooms in how many hours?**

Actually, seven hours for twelve rooms. Again, the time is better than now because now they bring their cooler. They bring a lot of things in the room. At that time, it's a little bit cheaper, so they go out to eat, outside. Now they bring a cooler. They bring a coffeemaker. They bring a lot of stuff in the room. That's why it's very hard. Housekeeping these days is very tough. It's not the same.

**Twelve rooms in seven hours.**

Twelve rooms in seven hours. If you have a checkout—every hotel is different. That hotel is five-star, five-diamond at that time when I was housekeeping, so we have nine checkouts. In total, you have to do nine. If you have eight, you have to do ten. If you have six and six, you have to do the complete room, twelve, the quota.

**If you're not finished at the end of your shift, what happens?**

Well, if you're not finished at the end of the shift, they might give you a writeup, but it depends how you're going to approach your manager. I am always fighting because I say, "Hey, I don't finish the room because this and this. I call you. You don't answer. What time you responded back to me?" You have to write down everything—why you didn't have the room done—and they give to you the quota. But you have to be strong enough to respond to the inspector. They have inspector they call QZ, and the other one is supervisor. Of course, they're not going to be

on my side because they're working with the company. That's why you have to be always—the most hard is your job. The job is hard for everybody, but nothing hard like a housekeeping job. To clean somebody's dirt in the toilet, to clean somebody else's dirt, it's just hard enough for you to swallow that. But they give you the quota to finish. Sometimes you don't have enough time to take a lunch. That's why a lot of people are sick, the housekeeping, shoulder, back, because it's too much, too much. Your body is...

**It's hard on the body.**

Hard on the body. I did it only for a couple of years. You can see one of my hands; it's not the same. See, it's not the same, and over here it's not the same. You can see their hand on the back. The majority is like if you need some pills for the painkiller. Ask them, they have it.

**The housekeepers do?**

The housekeeping. If you have a headache, if you have a pain for your back, if you have Band-Aid, whatever it is, they have everything because I did the same thing. It's a very tough job, especially now.

**How has the union helped make that job better?**

Right now, our union is fighting for that, us. We want to have a daily room service because if you don't have no daily room service, it's not getting better.

**Then the mess builds up.**

Yes. Our union is helping us to negotiate that, also. Also, we do the delegation, we do the rally, we do a lot of stuff to show to the company we're going to fight that. It's also going to breathe brighter and it's easier to go back to work because it's not going to be daily service cleaning. It's not going to get better.

**Wouldn't that affect their rating as well, the hotel's rating, though, if they don't have daily room service?**

They're affecting, but right now the company didn't see that because the company is seeing now the quantity, what you provide. Also, in your housekeeping, they're pushing you to do the company what they give you training, but sometimes you don't have time to do that. Majority don't take lunch. They don't take lunch. If you go now to the hotel, say twelve o'clock, if you have a hundred housekeeping in a big hotel, you can see how many people is going to take a lunch. Not maybe 25 percent of them are going to take a lunch.

**Because they're behind in their work.**

Behind in their work. Some of them are going to lie, "I take a lunch," because if they give you a quota, and you didn't finish, you're going to have a problem. Not everybody is a fighter.

**As an organizer, when you have people on your shift who can't get their work done because there's too much to do, how do they approach you?**

Some workers come to you; some don't. Let's say they give them a writeup, we have to ask you, "Look, how many credits they give to you." Thirteen credits. "Okay, so from the thirteen credits, how many have left?" Two or three. "What is the reason you didn't finish your credits, so they give you a writeup?" I'm going to go to the director of the housekeeping and say, "This is the reason she didn't finish." Also, we have rules to follow before pandemic. Also, somebody check the room, and Health District of Nevada, they have something. If they don't follow the protocol, then maybe they can finish the credit. If they follow it, they're not going to finish the credit. It's very tough. It's very tough. The majority don't go to eat, they don't. Sometimes it's a struggle sometimes to go to the restroom because, say, if you have an occupied room, you are not able to use the restroom. You have to go down where is the restroom for the employee. It took time for

you. If I'm going to go down, take the elevator, it took me like ten minutes. Sometimes they're holding it, holding it, until they go to another room. Because if they clean the occupied room, I want to go to the restroom, I'm not going to finish the room and leave like that until I finish, and then I go. I hope you can hold it. It's very bad. Because I was housekeeping, it broke my heart when I see them like that.

**If the room has been checked out, if the people have checked out, can you use the restroom in the room?**

You can use the restroom if they check out if nobody know it. Because the supervisor is not with you, you can say, hey, I'll use the restroom. But nobody knows your business. But occupied room is not because you don't want to...Some properties, they're not going to let you do it, either.

**Even if the people have checked out?**

Yes. Because if they catch you, you're going to have a problem. They're going to write you up.

**That's another ten minutes off your day.**

Or otherwise, you have a lot of restrooms. Say checkout, they're already gone, right? Maybe I have a five, I go already to another one. But sometimes you take a rest because you never know where is the supervisor knocking the door on that room because they have access to check it when the people check out.

**How long do you have after someone is checked out before the room has to be cleaned?**

It depends. It depends because sometimes they have a five-room checkout. I'm going to go over here, and it took me like one hour. They let you know if the room is rushed. Say, "Hey, can you please do this, and then you go to another one?" Otherwise, nobody let you know, and then you do your own, which one you're going to start for. It's changed a lot. These days are like, whew.

**How did the pandemic change your work?**

The pandemic changed work because before pandemic, automatically they assigned a room to the housekeeping. Because right now there is a shortage of workers, this company, they don't want to assign the room. They have a quota, twelve rooms. I know it's my room. They call it station. Now, what the company is doing is they're taking away your station, and they can send you to another floor, or send you this because they are short of workers. You go like this. And, also, the technology.

**How is the technology different?**

The technology, they call it Hot Spots. It's a device, like in your Apple phone. They call Hot Spots before I have station. Say I work on the tenth floor. From Station A, I've got twelve rooms, and Station B, you have twelve rooms. Right now, Station A is no longer going to be your station because this company, that's what they do, they take away your room to go to another floor because that room has an occupied room, and they're not letting you do that room. They're replacing it with another checkout. That is a big fight for us. It's a lot.

**When you're working, how many people are you responsible for on your shift? How many workers are on your shift at any one time in housekeeping?**

They have a day shift, they have a swing shift, and they have a graveyard. As a worker or house organizer?

**As an organizer, how many?**

Me, I have a different property. I don't have no quota to see those people. I go to different properties. Say I go to the Trump today, I see them at one o'clock, some of the shop stewards. Shop stewards work with us. They're volunteering their time to us. Of course, they have their



own list of twenty. They are the ones with more access to me on who has an issue, and they bring to me the issue.

**The workers go to the shop steward, and then the shop steward comes to you?**

Yes. Everybody has a different issue.

**But you mainly deal with housekeeping?**

Me, no. I have the airport, so I have a sky shift, home shift, I have the Trump, I have the Circa. That's totally different because as an organizer, if you have a big house, let's say, MGM or Bellagio, they have one hotel that has more employees, and then maybe they have three organizers in one property, or two organizers. Mine is Strip Two, little house. I have a ton of different contracts. Downtown is different. Airport is different. Home shift is different. Trump a little different. The only hotels I have is the Trump, Circa, Four Queens, and the Golden Nugget. That is house hotel.

**You're all over town. You're everywhere from downtown to the airport.**

Yes. But I love what I do.

**How long have you been an organizer?**

Since 2012, ten years. I was LOA, and they hired me as a staff, three years LOA.

**That's letter of appointment?**

Yes. Two and a half years, I think, LOA, and now I'm staff.

**Before that, were you a shop steward?**

Yes.

**At the Wynn and Encore?**

That's why I came to be involved because I don't like; this is injustice. Workers crying. I say, "Why you crying for?" It's a lot of challenge for housekeeping.

**I want to go back to food. When Cecilia asked about food. When you think of food that makes you happy, that brings back memories, what is it?**

The food that makes me happy, they have those called bitter melon. I love those bitter melon.

**Can you get it here?**

Yes. Always when I cook that, I always remember my dad because that's his favorite vegetable.

It's ugly, but I love it.

**How do you fix it?**

I just like the leaves because you can cook different kind. The leaves you can put in called bean smoogle. Then also like a fruit, the vegetable, you can cut it and use garlic, onion, and put some tomato or eggs or something. If you want to make me happy, it's that way.

**Your dad used to fix that?**

Yes, my dad.

**Was your dad from the same place that you were from?**

Yes, from Nueva Ecija; that's where my dad grew up.

**Did he have brothers and sisters?**

Oh yes. They have a big family, too. They have eight in their family, but I lost them when they're young.

**How old was your dad when he passed?**

Fifty-six.

**Oh, he was young, too.**

Yes, he was young. I lost two uncles and one aunt, the same issue. They were very young.

**And farming is hard work.**

Yes, farming is hard work. In the Philippines, not everybody have Medicare, insurance. They go to the doctor when they're really sick. It's like you catch a disease or whatever when you're already there. Nobody knows they're diabetic. Nobody knows if you have high blood pressure. Probably you're going to know you have high blood pressure when you have a heart attack. Like my dad, he got three heart attacks; the third one, he didn't survive.

**And his brothers and sisters, too?**

Same, yes. It only gets my dad better when I immigrate and am making money to support them otherwise, it's like my uncle and my aunt. It's still the same thing these days because some have insurance; some don't. If you don't have nothing... That's why people immigrate to another country, to make money to support their family. That was very hard.

**Yes. Your mom raised your son until he was sixteen?**

Yes.

**That must have been hard for her when he came here.**

Yes. My son actually goes back and forth.

**Does he?**

Yes. The bad part is the same because he has a wife in the Philippines now and the kids, and they're still there. He tries to bring them over here because after this pandemic, everything stopped. I hope I see my grandkids—I see them in the Facebook or whatever, how you can call. In social media, whatever it is. I see them in Messenger. My grandson is three years old, and I never met him yet, the other one. Now she is pregnant. I hope. I was talking to my son. I said, "I hope before Christmas they're here." It's very hard. My son is taking a routine for his life. But at least we have this; they can see each other with Messenger.

**What does your son do for a living?**

My son is working here. He works in the casino. That is the bad part. I sent him to be a nurse, but he never liked it. That's why your dream you cannot give to somebody else. It doesn't work. I'd love to be a nurse. I was pushing my son hard to be a nurse. When he graduated, he passed and everything. He never used the career. Nothing, nothing. He'd rather work in the casino than use his career, but because it's not his passion to do it. I am the one sending you to go to school to be this, to spend the money, but nothing is there. Until this day, I'd like to be one of them, a nurse.

**Your sisters became nurses, though, because you allowed that. You paid for them to go to school to do that.**

Yes.

**Did they love it? No?**

Yes, I sacrificed myself. My husband said, "We want to have a child." I said, "No. I don't have a child because I have already one. It's my goal to finish my son and my two sisters." I did the goal. I paid for the school and everything. That's okay, I'm happy because whatever they learned, nobody can take away from them.

**That's right. And even if they don't become nurses, they've still got that knowledge that they'll have forever.**

Yes. But the bad part is this. They passed the exam and everything. They got certified and everything. If they want to go to work to be a nurse, they can go to work. But they don't use it. Nothing, nothing. It's like we were talking last night, my sister and I, about that. We had a discussion about that. "If I'm going to be a nurse like that, probably I'm going to have a husband doctor," like another sister that was here. She said, "If I'm going to be a nurse, I'd have a doctor husband." I said, "Me, too." I don't know if the two sisters that I sent to be a nurse, they have a dream to have like that. Now they have a husband, and they have children. It's nothing changed.

I want to sacrifice to make our family better, to lift them up, but I think love is love, and they find a guy, whoever he is, it's the same there. Nothing up, nothing down, the same. Nothing. I'm still happy. Look at all I did.

**Yes, you did.**

But it didn't work for them. A lot of sacrifice, right?

**Yes. Can I ask you what it was like as a woman in Saudi Arabia?**

Sure.

**How was that?**

It's hard there because you have to wear those abayas when I go to take the children to the park. We have a park. We live in Aramco, but you cannot go out like these clothes. You have to wear a thin sleeve.

**Long sleeves?**

Yes. Pants like that. Then you have another clothes called abaya. Until these days, I have it.

**You still have it.**

Yes.

**You had to cover your hair?**

Yes, you cover your hair. Sometimes you cover your hair. I like to put my ear out because you can hear. Your employer says, "No. It has to cover here." You cover like this, no hair out when you go to the park.

**Even when it's really hot.**

Even when it's hot. No, you cannot sit outside showing your hair. Everywhere you go, you have to be like that. Inside the house, you have to do that. Not the long one called abaya. But the base, you still cover your hair inside the house.

**Did you feel safe there?**

Because we are in Aramco, American community, it's safe. It's safe because I worked with a doctor and, also, they have knowledge because they grew up here. The mother is a teacher, and the father is admiral. They grew up in New York. That's why they are different. It's safe. All of them are family doctors, that's why.

**You were living more in an American community with Aramco?**

Yes. It's American, yes. Inside Aramco, you can drive a car. You can't go to the movie unless it's a cartoon.

**And if it's not a cartoon?**

No movie. It's only cartoon movies. It's always cartoon.

**Just one last question. What does it mean to you that the Asian American Pacific Islander communities are the fastest-growing segment of our population here in Southern Nevada?**

For me, it's very important because Asian is growing, and sometime like now, when I start with the union, I was always by myself, and now it's more people involved in the union, also, not much, but at least we have a couple of us. Before, I was only by myself. Oh, and Connie. At the time, we didn't have nobody. It kind of excites me. We have a shop steward, and I see Japanese and Korean. Before, it doesn't have it, no. I have Estella and a couple of those, but our people, no.

**Is there anything we haven't asked you that you'd like to talk about?**

I don't know. I think you guys asked me a lot.

**Thank you so much.**

You're welcome.

**[End of recorded interview]**