

Male Speaker: I want you to say this, start again, please say your name and spell it.

Angeline Papadakis: My name is Angeline Papadakis, A-N-G-E-L-I-N-E, P-A-P-A-D-A-K-I-S. Correctly, it's supposed to be pronounced Papadakis. It's Papadakis all over, everywhere I go, and I speak it's Papadakis. I'm introduced as Angie Papadakis. In San Pedro, it's Papadakis. I don't know why. My husband told me it was Papadakis, that was it when I came here as a bride sixty years ago.

MS: So, it was like San Pedro and San Pedro.

AP: Exactly.

MS: It is going to be San Pedro. [laughter]

AP: Whatever they say it is, it is.

MS: It is.

AP: That's it.

MS: Like Cabrillo beach.

AP: Whatever they say. If they say it is, it is. That's it.

Male Speaker: Angie. You...

AP: My hair?

MS: Just on the other side of your part, right at the top.

MS: She cannot see it.

MS: I can see it. It is right there.

MS: There.

AP: Oh.

MS: It looks great now.

MS: Now, it looks great.

AP: Oh.

MS: Because your hair looks so nice.

MS: Can I ask you? I know this is not a thing to do to a lady, but can we ask you the year you were born and where?

AP: Yes. I was born in Enid, Oklahoma. Because when my father and mother came from Greece, the second time they came, they went to the train station. They wanted to come to Los Angeles. They didn't have enough money to come to Los Angeles. They put them off. My dad said, "Take me as close to Los Angeles as possible because they say it had the same weather." My father had worked in the steel mills of Gary, Indiana, when he was single. So, he hated that weather. He didn't want any place near there. They let him off at Enid, Oklahoma.

MS: [inaudible]

AP: He was the only Greek in Enid, Oklahoma. [laughter] There were a lot of Indians there and a lot of – we're talking about 1924. I was born there in 1925.

MS: In Enid?

AP: In Enid, Oklahoma.

MS: When did you first come to Los Angeles and what were the circumstances of that?

AP: Well, my mother, until my father got enough money together to take her back to Greece. Because every day she wanted to get back for a trip, not forever, he finally got her back to her village. Then when they came back, they had enough money to go all the way to Los Angeles. That's where my younger sister was born, in Los Angeles.

MS: How old were you when you came to Los Angeles?

AP: Five.

MS: Five?

AP: Five and I didn't speak a word of English by that time because I'd never been out of the house in Enid, Oklahoma and in Greece, of course. When I went to school, I wasn't the only one that didn't speak English. There were a lot of kids. There were Dutch, Russian, German, all kinds of kids. We all learned English. Amazing, isn't it? Amazing. How we learned English in kindergarten with a jellybean. If we had the word right, we got a jellybean.

MS: So, tell me more about that. How did you learn English and what were the rewards? Tell me that story of how you learned English as how you remember it.

AP: I remember it clearly because I fought this whole bilingual program from the time it started. We never were out of the house in Enid, Oklahoma. When we got a house in Los Angeles, my father rented a house in L.A., we weren't allowed to go outside and play. So, the only time we were allowed to go anywhere was school and we had to come right straight back. While in school, I didn't know where bathroom was, where this was, where that was. Some other kid

would say, "Come here, come with me," some other little girl and she would take me. She knew that I had to go to the bathroom because she saw the strained look on my face, I guess. From then on, it was easy because she was my friend. She was an American. She looked at me and she go and make fun, and I would laugh. We were friends. I learned more English from her than I did from the teacher. But that's how it was. Then pretty soon all of us were speaking English as though we were natives. It was no trouble at all because there was no alternative. The teacher rewarded us for learning with just a big jellybean jar that we could go and take one jellybean, any color we wanted, out of that jar. Quite a great incentive. But that was kindergarten, very simple.

MS: So, you were five years old.

AP: Five.

MS: What were your impressions of Los Angeles when you first saw it?

AP: So big. We couldn't believe how big it was. We couldn't believe that we were going for I don't know how long to get streetcars with suitcases in streetcars. There was a UCAR on 39th Street and that's the one we've taken. Downtown was unbelievable. All those buildings downtown and department stores downtown with so much stuff in them. We only went on dollar days because dollar days you could buy everything for a \$1, almost anything for a \$1. So, that was...

MS: Do you remember a favorite kind of thing you would like to do as a little girl when you were growing up?

AP: Going to the show.

MS: Tell me about it.

AP: The movies. We had a theater on Western Avenue near 39th Street. We lived on Harvard, 39th and Harvard. The movie theater was on Western Avenue. That was a big thing, adults were twenty-five cents and kids were ten cents. We wanted to get some ice cream – not ice cream. It was a big bear bar right next to the – they sold them in a little ice cream shop right next to the theater. We couldn't afford it, either to go to the show or get a big bear bar. So, we go to the show.

MS: Do you remember any movies that stuck in your imagination?

AP: No, but we remembered the serials. Every week, they would have – not The Perils of Pauline, but later than that. But I can't remember exactly which ones they were, but I remember the serials. I remember the newsreels, about the news that was a bore for us. Nothing was quiet in the theater. The theater was alive. Everybody made comments about everything. There were no ushers. There was nothing, twenty-five cents for adults and sometimes my mother couldn't come because she just had enough for us three girls and it was 10 cents for us.

MS: What did your father do when he came here?

AP: He...

MS: I think you did not hear my question. Say "My father –"

AP: My father supported us by working in a market until he earned his partnership in his market with another Greek, who was his brother-in-law, his sister's husband. His sister's husband only had one son. My father had three daughters that he had to support and a wife. So, he graciously allowed my father to work in the market for his partnership. Then when he figured that my dad had earned his partnership, then he allowed him to take the profits, whatever profits there were. There weren't many profits because I remember going to the market and helping put cans in the shelves out of cases. I remember that we had a surprise dinner every so often because we'd get the cans that were bent or torn labels. We wouldn't know what was in them, but we'd eat them anyway, whatever it was. We'd get all the bruised apples and we'd get all the bruised – and carrots, I remember were one penny a bunch. I would say to my father, "When you go to a wholesale market and buy carrots, how much do you pay for them?" He said, "I pay a penny a bunch." I said, "Well, how do you make any money?" He says, "Well, when I buy the bunch, it has fifteen carrots in it. When I sell the bunch, it doesn't have fifteen carrots in it." It has...

MS: Wise.

AP: Yes. [laughter] But because he sells them for a penny a bunch, but he gets two bunches out of one.

MS: Right, that is very wise.

AP: Yes.

MS: So, you grew up basically in Los Angeles area. Tell me where you went to school and –

AP: Santa Barbara Avenue School.

MS: Who were the kids in that school and what was that school like?

AP: Santa Barbara Avenue School was a wonderful school. We were all in the same social, economic level.

MS: Just start it again. We were all...

AP: Santa Barbara Avenue School was a school that was in a poor community. We were all on the same level economically. So, there were no kids that we were really envious of. Maybe there was one little girl that was being raised by her grandmother that her hair always looked wonderful and she was always very well dressed. But she didn't have a mama and papa. She had a grandmother that raised her. So, their parents split or something. So, I didn't envy her. But she had a lot of dolls and a lot of choice. She invited me over once in a while. I'll never

forget her. Her name was Donna. I don't remember her last name. But the best part about Santa Barbara Avenue School, and the fun part about it, was, we had some wonderful teachers. Teachers that were devoted to teaching. I mean, mostly old maids. I mean, you never saw a ring on their finger. This was their life. They loved us. They did great things for us. I'll tell you one story about a teacher that taught me a great deal. I used to turn myself inside out to make kids like me. The teacher's name was Ms. (Del Miele?). I'll never forget her. She came up to me and she said, "Why do you do this?" I said, "I don't know." She said, "I have a story to tell you. There was a bird and someone said to the bird, 'I don't like that feather, that feather sticks out. What do you have that feather there for?' The bird pulled it out. Somebody else came up, 'That feather is ugly, wrong color, doesn't match the other feathers, pull it out,' so on and pretty soon the bird didn't have any more feathers and he couldn't fly." She said, "Don't give anybody your feathers. Don't turn yourself inside out to be like everybody else. Be yourself." From then on, I was a happy girl. I didn't try to be like Donna. I didn't try to be like anybody else. I was happy to be who I was.

MS: That is a wonderful story.

AP: Wonderful story. But a wonderful teacher, Ms. Del Miele. I'll never forget this other teacher, (Ms. Bartlett?), who used to wear one brown knit dress all week. The next week, she would wear one navy print knit dress all week. We knew what week it was. [laughter] She was a bore. But Ms. Del Miele, years later, I heard that she was in a rest home. I went and saw her. I told her how much I owed her because I didn't get reinforced. My mother did not want daughters. She had three daughters, didn't want either one of us. She wanted boys because boys would be an asset to the family. Girls, it would take a dowry to get rid of us. She did have to pay off some Greek boy to marry us.

MS: What about your father's attitude?

AP: My father loved us. My father played with us. As tired as he was when he came home, he would wrestle on the floor with us. On Sundays, when the market was closed, he'd put us on his shoulder and he'd take us to the beach. We'd go to Redondo Beach. Then we'd also buy fish at Redondo Beach Pier and then come home and then cook the fish and have dinner. The ocean was very important to the Greek people. They all went to the beach. They all went to the beach. Because wherever they were in Greece, they were near water. So, that was life giving to them.

MS: Early on, you started writing.

AP: Yes, I started writing.

MS: Tell me about that.

AP: I wanted to be an actress, that was out of the question. But I got into the senior play at Dorsey High School. We did *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. The man and – who was it? The guy that played Ironside. There was a man in the play, but he didn't –

MS: Raymond Burr.

AP: Yes. But the girl was Elena Verdugo that played the actress. I played Maggie, the secretary, on one performance. But that wasn't enough for our drama director. She made us switch roles and learn both parts because they weren't that meaty. The real star was the guy in the wheelchair, the Whiteside or whatever. We did this play two weeks in a row. The director, I didn't know, had an agent from 20th Century Fox in the audience. After the second performance, where we switched roles, he offered a screen test to me and Elena Verdugo to come Monday morning and go to 20th Century Fox and we're going to have a screen test. I went home on cloud nine telling my parents that I'm going to go to have a screen test. You have to drive me too in a car. My mother said, "No, we did not come to this country so you could disgrace us, disgrace the family, disgrace everybody." I said, "Mama, please, it's just a screen test. I may not make it." "No." "I can make lot of money." "No, no, no." I had been in a film, Shirley Temple film called...

MS: Hold on one second before you tell me that story. She was going to remind you last night. We went somewhere and we forgot to remind everybody.

AP: Well, whatever. I'm here now.

MS: You started to say you were in another movie with Shirley Temple?

AP: I was in a movie with...

MS: I am sorry, start again.

AP: I played the violin. Because my parents thought that my sister should play the piano, I should play the violin, we had violin lessons. We were going to be marketable if we had talents. So, marketable to a groom, not to anybody else, to a groom. Because the big idea is to get rid of us, get marry us off. But I was just in second, third grade and started with the violin. Then at school, I was in the school orchestra. One day, everyone in the school orchestra was invited to go to 20th Century Fox to be in a movie with Shirley Temple, *Little Miss Broadway*. We were orphans in an orphanage. She was an orphan in an orphanage. Then she escaped from the orphanage. At the window, I got one speaking part, it's "What'll I tell the matron?" That was the first taste of being in a film. I earned something like \$175, something out of control, a lot of money. With that, my parents bought me a really good violin because the violin I had was cracked and it was, you know? [laughter] So, hey, I was going to be a violinist, you know what I mean? Then what happened is, years later, I was in high school and I was in this play with *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Elena Verdugo played the actress and I played the secretary, Maggie. We didn't do night performances because there was a war on. The next day, I did the actress and she did Maggie, the secretary. Well, there was a man in the audience who was a scout for 20th Century Fox. He offered screen test for both of us. I went home ecstatic. I went home, told mother I was going to be, but says, "No, not a little kid in kindergarten." I'm seventeen years old and I want to be an actress. Mama said, "You want to be an actress, take your clothes, take your stuff. I'll give you a box and leave, that's it. You're out of here. We don't have actresses in our family." That's it. She was adamant that I was not going to do it. I was heartbroken. "No, you can cry all you want. You're not going to be an actress. You're not

going to go for a screen test." I said, "I might not make it." "It doesn't matter. You're not going." So, that was the end of that. Elena Verdugo, I followed her career. She was in a movie about Gaugin. She played a native woman in that thing. Then she married a writer director, I can't remember his name. But she was in *Meet Millie* and she was the star. She got first Emmy at CBS and she invited me. I went and I saw her and her husband. By that time, I was married. I envied her, here she is. She is top of the world and just having a wonderful time. Then she was in *Marcus Welby* for years. But then she divorced her husband and he got their son, and who knows what happened in the interim years. Finally, she got a part as a nurse in *Marcus Welby*. She went on with that series until the end when they close. She married the medical adviser to the series and lived happily ever after.

MS: Did you ever tell her the story of your mother saying no to you?

AP: Of course, she knew because I'd see her in school and I tell her the story. She went, "Oh, what's the matter with your mother?" But it doesn't matter, my mother rules the roost.

MS: What were the circumstances of you coming to San Pedro? Why did you come to San Pedro?

AP: My husband was from San Pedro. Mine was an arranged marriage. His father had eight kids, all married. The girls were married to American boys. The boys were married to American girls. His youngest son came back from the Navy. He takes him to the Greek Orthodox Church. He says, "Pick out anyone you want." There's only one Greek Orthodox Church in LA. Tom spotted me and he goes to his father. He told his father who I was, found out who I was. So, his father found out who my father was. Monday morning, bright and early, he goes to my father's market in Los Angeles and he says, "Shake hands, we're going to be related by marriage." My dad said, "I don't know what you're talking about." He says, "Your daughter, Angie, is going to marry my son, Tom." My dad said, "Don't talk to me about weddings. I just had a wedding for my oldest daughter. It cost me almost \$1,000." In those days, you could have bought anything with \$1,000. He said, "I'm not in a position to have another wedding for another year. So, don't talk to me about weddings." Nick said, "Well, if that's the only problem, I'll pay for the wedding." So, my dad said, "Okay, you can have her [laughter] with a handshake." That's it. Then they told me about it.

MS: So, go back, you are in the church?

AP: Yes, I had no idea.

MS: Did you know what was going on?

AP: No, I had no clue. I was in the choir in the church. The church choir was on this side of the church in three rows. There was the priest and here are the congregation. All he ever got was maybe a profile because I couldn't look at the church. But I got out of church. I was talking with some friends outside of church and he spotted me, I guess. He told his dad, "That's the one. If there is going to be the one, that's the one."

MS: So, when did you meet him formally for the first time?

AP: The following Sunday, outside of church, he comes up to me. He says, "I'd like to take you out. How about this Saturday night?" I said, "No, I'm sorry, I can't date. I don't date." He said, "What do you mean you don't date?" I said, "My parents won't allow me to date." He didn't impress me. I had three other guys lined up. So, I had been writing to three other guys. They were all in the service and all. Well, he goes up to my mother. My mother is with these Greek ladies in a circle and they're talking. He said, "Why won't you let your daughter go out with me?" Of course, my mother was in on what was going on. She said, "I have no objection." He said, "Oh.". So, he comes over to me and he says, "Your mother has no objection." I said, "What?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Okay. You can take me out" I figured, "Hey, I can go out. I can have a good time." Well, the first time he came over, he brought me a ring. I said, "What are you doing? I'm not, no." He said, "Hey, it's going to happen. That's it. It's done. It's a done deal. You're going to marry me." [laughter] I kept laughing up. We dated for three months and then we got married in September. We met in May and we got married in September. I thought we were going to get engaged in September. I figured I can always get out of an engagement. In the meantime, I'm out of the house, having a good time, going by. Let him take me bye-bye. Instead, my father-in-law – I thought he had sent out engagement invitations. He sent out wedding invitations. So, the die was cast. There was no way I could get out of it. I had the best sixty years of my life. I married the right guy. I look at the other guys I could have married. I had a wonderful life. But when I first came to San Pedro, can you imagine leaving Los Angeles, I'd worked at the Office of Price Administration for three years. I got to be a district survey supervisor.

MS: Let us go back then. So, what were your impressions of San Pedro when you first got to know it?

AP: The most beautiful place that I had ever seen.

MS: San Pedro. You have to say San Pedro.

AP: San Pedro, the most beautiful. Of course, he took me to the top of the hill, where they have on Palos Verdes Drive East where you have a view of [inaudible]. The most beautiful. He took me to Point Fermin Park. But I couldn't believe how gorgeous San Pedro was and the view. I said, "If you find me a house with a view of it, you'll come home to a happy wife every night." His father bought us a house. His father had bought houses for all eight of his children. In those days, a house was \$10,000. Well, at first, we were living in an apartment. He came home one night from work and he said, "My dad bought us a house." I said, "What if I don't like it?" He said, "He bought it. You love it." [laughter] "All right, but what if I really don't like it?" He said, "I'll fix it any way you want. But you have to say thank you." I said, "Hey, I'll say thank you." I said, "You couldn't even just ask me if I liked this." "No. He says he bought it. It's ours. Forget about it." So, we fixed it. It was wonderful. It's still there. It's very nice. But I don't still live there.

MS: What did your father-in-law do?

AP: My father-in-law owned a hotel.

MS: I am sorry if I was coughing, start again.

AP: My father-in-law owned a hotel in San Pedro. The first one hundred room hotel in San Pedro. He owned liquor stores. At first, during the – what did they call it, when they didn't allow alcohol.

MS: Prohibition.

AP: During prohibition, my father-in-law was a – he made liquor and he sold it. It was against the law, but they made a lot of money. That's how he was able to buy houses and that's how he was able to build a hotel. He built a beautiful house for himself, at the same time, they were building the hotel. It was the first one hundred room hotel in San Pedro. He owned liquor stores when it was not against the law to sell liquor. He went in the liquor business because that's what he knew. He made quite a bit of money. But he had eight children and he had to support. He imported his brothers and helped them. He helped a lot of people. He was a very generous man.

MS: Being in a liquor business in San Pedro in those days, it is a pretty rowdy town, was it not?

AP: Very rowdy.

MS: Tell me about that. So, the liquor business is pretty lucrative because of that.

AP: Oh, yes. Well, because it was San Pedro and it's a shame that you talk about the Barbary Coast in San Francisco. We had our Beacon Street. You don't walk there at night by yourself, unless you're looking for trouble. Guys would come out of the bars. They're drunk and seamen. Hey, seamen are wonderful people. They are necessary people. But when they hit the shore, they become different people. You just don't go down to Beacon Street unless you're looking for trouble. It was a different kind of town on Beacon Street. It was the higher up you went in San Pedro. But there was nothing there except houses. That was Mecca.

MS: Was there a substantial Greek community in San Pedro?

AP: Well, I say substantial, ten maybe fifteen families.

MS: Say to me, that was Greek families.

AP: Yes, Greek family.

MS: So, start again from the top.

AP: Oh, there weren't many Greek families in San Pedro at the time. There were just a handful, maybe fifteen at the tops of Greek families. We all knew each other and we all hang together. We all went to the Greek Orthodox Church in Long Beach because it was the closest. Then years and years later, the Redondo Beach community built a Greek church there and then some

of them went the other.

MS: So, who were the kind of people that were around you? What was the populace of San Pedro like? Who were they and what were the different groups in the city?

AP: Well, my father-in-law, as I said, had a very big family. So, we really didn't need to go outside – we would get together. All the girls were married, as I said, to American boys. We got together. We were a big united Greek family. I mean, even though they were all American boys, they had to be Greek. They knew all the right words. They knew all the necessary words in Greek. So, they obviously knew if we were yelling at them or cussing at them or something like that. But not me, I wouldn't cuss at him, by the way. But their wives, they all worked for my father-in-law. When the war was over, my sisters-in-law, only one sister-in-law married a Greek boy. The other girls married American boys that they had met here when they were in the service. They all blended in. We were all one family. It was wonderful because we had parties. We had big picnics at Peck Park or big picnics at the beach in Long Beach. In those days, we'd go to Long Beach on Avenue #5. We took the beach over because there was so many of us. You can imagine eight kids and everybody had children. The kids' cousins all played together. Of course, they tease the younger ones and mine were the youngest. So, they always got it. But they also saved the life of one of my nephews that we went over. One sister-in-law had a swimming pool. I invited my sister to come with me. She brought her little kids. One of them was almost drowning in the pool. With so many people around, we didn't notice. Had it not been for my sister-in-law's son, that jumped in the pool and saved him, he could have drowned and we were all sitting around talking.

MS: What about the port, the harbor? Did you have any relationship to that, to the ships, and coming in and out and all that.

AP: It was fun going to Cabrillo beach and seeing these ships. I can't imagine where they'd been. What they're carrying? It is a mind blower to be so close to something so big as a cargo ship. I don't remember any steamships, any cruise ships that came in at that time, I don't remember. If ever they did, I can't remember that.

MS: But also, during the war, there are always military check.

AP: Oh, they Navy, yes. But the Navy at long beach was the navy -- that's the port, where if you wanted to see a sailor, you went to Long Beach. You went on Ocean Avenue. You saw everything. But I didn't go on Ocean Avenue.

MS: What about the shipyards, the shipbuilding? You see the ships coming and being built. Do you ever watch any of that?

AP: There was a tragic story about a Greek. A true story about a Greek lady who had a son and a daughter and only one son. She just didn't want him to go to war. She didn't want him to go to war. She didn't want him to go to war. She was afraid he was going to be drafted. The only way he got out of going to the war was to work at Todd shipyards, a deferment to work a [inaudible] here, and he was killed. He fell off or something. He was killed. She went downhill

from there. She couldn't believe, none of the Greek people. We are like one community. It was so tragic that he was saved from going to the war, and he died working, falling down and getting killed from up heigh, something or other in his job.

MS: What did your husband do?

AP: My husband worked for his father, as everyone in the family worked for my father-in-law. All my brother-in-laws, my husband's brother-in-laws, work for my father-in-law. My husband had two older brothers. They were in charge. Well, not George, but Gus was in charge. He was the second oldest. When Gus died, he died very young, forty years old, of a heart attack. My husband was pushed into taking over. Before that, he had worked in the liquor stores, managing liquor stores. He had to take over the business. He did and he took over. So, finally, he sold the liquor stores after the riots, remember the riots in LA? It wasn't feasible because he couldn't hire people that would work there. They were afraid. He sold the liquor stores and kept the property. Then he just became property management. So, we have property.

MS: What about downtown San Pedro? When you were in the [19]40s and [19]50s, what were the places there? What was it like? What was 6th Street like, 5th Street like? What were they like in those...

AP: Very much the same. Very little has changed. A 6th Street was always 6th Street. Pacific was better. It had a wonderful dress shop that I used to go in and buy a dress, and it was wonderful. You didn't have to go to LA to buy a dress. You could buy it when there. Very nice dress. The Pacific Avenue was very nice. It didn't go downhill until after the war. After the war, it went kind of downhill. But during the war, it was alive. It was very good.

MS: Describe what was there then during the war.

AP: During the war?

MS: Yes, what was it like? Who were the shops? What did you do for entertainment, or did you go out?

AP: The theater. The show is our big entertainment. We had three theaters, one on Pacific Avenue, one on 6th Street, and one on 7th Street that had large seats in the balcony. You could smoke up there. My husband smoked, so we sat up there. Then in self-defense, I started smoking until I had pneumonia and then I had to stop smoking. But I regret those years that I smoked, but I enjoyed them. I just enjoyed smoking. But I would have been better off had I not smoked. But he smoked and pretty soon you do it in self-defense. We didn't party. We didn't go out and party or drink or do things like that because he had to be responsible. My husband had to be responsible. If he wanted to drink once in a while, he'd come home and make himself a gin and tonic before we had dinner. But that's it, not two, one. When he was forty, he had a stroke but he didn't die, thank God. From then on, he was a health nut. No alcohol, no smoking. Well, once in a great while, he would have one but that was it. He took very good care of himself, vitamins, minerals, supplements, all kinds of things. He was a real health nut.

MS: You talked a little bit about this already. But what was the role of women in the community in San Pedro?

AP: The men were in charge. In San Pedro, whether you're talking to an Italian family, a Slavonian family, any family here, we're all ethnic mix. The men are in charge. I mean, if they tell you to sit down and shut up, you better sit down and shut up. I don't know about battery because it never happened in my house. But [laughter] he did once get very annoyed with me. I wouldn't say annoyed but mad. He took a swing at me and I had a shiner. I never let that shiner fade. I went and bought eyeshadow, and every day it looked worse. [laughter] I suffered in silence. I didn't speak to him for like, I don't know, a week, two weeks. Finally, he came home with a great big bunch of roses and a bottle of champagne. He said how sorry he was and everything like that. From then on, everything was hunky-dory. But he did. What happened is we were arguing in bed and I hit him like that, just like that. [laughter] He hit me right back. He said, "I'm not a punching bag." He got me right here and that was...

MS: From your mother's role in your life, the women found a place for power?

AP: Women what?

MS: Women found power in a way.

AP: Oh. Yes, absolutely. I tell you Greek women are supposed to be subservient to their husbands. Their husbands are supposed to be their boss, and they are the boss. If I said, "I want to go to this party. I want to go." If he said, "We're not going." That's it. There's no use talking. You have to respect the authority of your husband. It's ingrained in you. Absolutely, he is the boss. You don't fight it. You don't argue it. You played it, but you may not win. There's no way that you can dominate your man. If you can dominate your man, then he is worthless. He is worthless. Not just in your eyes, but in the community. Because if a woman can pull him around by the nose, he's not wearing the pants in the family.

MS: But you, as a woman, had quite successful life.

AP: I've made my own money. I was independent. I went on speaking tours. I made a lot of money. He said, "Do whatever you want with it." That's it, do whatever you want with it. But don't think you're going to, you know? I made the mistake once of showing him my checkbook – not my checkbook, my savings account. Then when I said, "Well, we need new drapes." "Well, you want new drapes, but I don't want new drapes. You want new drapes, buy a new drape." He didn't care. A big mistake. I shouldn't have done that. But he was fair. He was the provider.

MS: We will talk about Papadakis, how did that start? That is an important part of the San Pedro community.

AP: My son played football at SC, senior year, he graduated. Everything was fine. They recruited him to go to Berkeley to coach at Berkeley because what they really wanted was to be able to recruit Southern California kids up there. So, they will pick somebody who played at SC.

But how much money did he make, 10,000, 11,000 a year period? In the meantime, my son's only idea was to get married. He didn't want to play football anymore. All he wants to do is get married to Donna. He fell in love with the girl in his senior year at SC. He married her, went up to Berkeley with her as the bride. But he couldn't make it on 10,000 a year and rent on a cabin is what they rented and expenses, living expenses. So, he got a night job at the Refectory Restaurants up there. The owners of the Refectory Restaurant said, "We want a twenty-seven percent profit." They had a snack bar. They had a regular bar, drinking bar. They had steaks that were all uniformly cut. So, they knew how much profit. "We don't want a thirty percent profit. We don't want a twenty-five percent profit. We want a twenty-seven percent profit." Every night, he was taking \$4,000 to the night deposit. He said, "There's money to be made in the restaurant business. What the hell am I doing up here? Coaching the grass? They won't let me coach kids." All they wanted him for is to go down the south and recruit kids for Berkeley. So, he said, "That's it. I'm going back home." After the year was up and his contract was up, he didn't sign for another year. He came down and he found this little Greasy Spoon that had closed around the corner. He said, "Dad, give that to me and don't charge me too much rent. I'm going to open up a Greek restaurant." His dad said, "You are nuts. You're in for it. That's hard work. What are you thinking?" He said, "That's it." They had gone to Greece for their honeymoon, John and Donna. He had seen the Greek tavernas, and that was in the back of his mind. He's going to open up a Greek taverna in San Pedro. Well, [laughter] my mother cried the day it opened. I said, "Mama, why are you crying?" She said, "They come from the old country. They open up a Greek restaurant. They don't go to USC for four years and open up a Greek restaurant." I said, "You're right. But what am I going to do with him?" The first day that he got the place cleaned up, and his wife made all the tablecloths and the curtains in blue and white and everything, John calls me up and he says, "I want you to come down and show me how to make *pastitsio*." I said, "What?" He says, "I have to learn how to make a *moussaka* and all these dishes." I said, "John, you want me –" He says, "Stop at Safeway or at Vons or someplace and buy the ingredients, and I'll reimburse you. Just come down and show me how to do it." I said, "You're opening up a Greek restaurant, you don't know how to cook and you don't have a cook?" He says, "I can learn. I'm a good learner, don't worry." He cooked. He learned how to cook. I said, "I'm not making." I did make the *baklava* for one year, the *baklava*. But I taught Donna then how to make it, his wife. I said, "I can show you this. It's easy," and I taught her how to make it. But he started that Greek restaurant by himself and with my mother's recipes. I can't say that they're my recipes, my mother's recipes. I learned from her. Then he finally got a Greek cook. When business started, like that, he got a cook off one of the ships. They had to be really good cooks because they'd get killed and thrown overboard if they weren't good cooks. So, on these freighters that came in, he recruited a Greek cook and all was well. From then on, he's had a lot of different cooks, but that's all right. The recipes are the same.

MS: The *pastitsio*, I could say is good.

AP: Good.

MS: [laughter]

AP: They're good.

MS: The relationship between San Pedro and Los Angeles, I mean, you lived here a long time. How do you see that relationship?

AP: San Pedro and LA were considered the stepchildren. San Pedro was a stepchild of Los Angeles. We always felt that we never got a fair shake from LA. There are a lot of talk about, "Hey, let's separate ourselves from LA." It never happened. We had some wonderful council people like Councilman Gibson, John S. Gibson. He was a friend and a good man. Of course, Joan Flores. I thought she was wonderful. Rudy Svorinich, we've had a lot of people who have done – tried to do right by San Pedro in this area. So, we've quieted down. You don't hear about separating anymore.

MS: Let us talk about your life in San Pedro. I mean, you were San Pedro Woman of the Year once. I mean, what is your relationship personally? What is your personal relationship with San Pedro? What does it mean to you personally?

AP: Well, San Pedro is where my kids went to school. San Pedro is where I went to the – well, part of it, they graduated from Peninsula High. But that's when we moved up there. I wanted a house with a view because I didn't have one on 15th Street. But I do have one now. But San Pedro is where I raised my kids. That's where they played little league. That's where they played in Averill Park. They played in the middle of the street. It's a wonderful community and nice people, good people, such a rich blend from every culture. The Italians have added so much. The Slavonian people have added so much. Dalmatian, I don't know the difference between Dalmatian Hall and Slav Hall. To us, it's still going to be Slav Hall. I don't care what they call it. But that's what it used to be. Anyway, I love the people. They're all very nice people. The black people that lived here were very nice people. The Mexican people who live here, very nice people. We get along fine with everyone.

MS: In your own personal relationship, talk about the kinds of things you've done on behalf of San Pedro and working within San Pedro.

AP: My involvement community service started with the PTA. Then I just got the bug. Then I was in the Friday Morning Club, and then the Assistance League, and all these. I'm on the advisory board of the Assistance League. I'm not a volunteer member. I don't have that kind of time. I was appointed. I've never run for office, but I've been appointed to things. But I've been asked to run for office. But my husband would never allow me to run for office. When Jim Hayes died – no, before he died, when he was a supervisor, he had appointed me to the Department of Public Social Services Commission. I saw that kids that were in foster care and the kids that we had wards of the court. They had a third or fourth grade education here. They were sixteen years old. I said, "What is going on? We're robbing these kids of an education," I told Jim Hayes. He said, "Well, why don't you get on the County Board of Education and see what you can do about it?" So, I went on the County Board of Education. I tried to make some noise. I was against busing. I thought that was the worst thing in the world. I was against bilingual education. Finally, I was no longer on the County Board of Education and Deukmejian picked me up. He put me on the State Board of Education. He said, "Why don't you make some noise up there and see what you can do?" So, I was on the State Board of Education until my term was up. Then I came up against Willie Brown. He said, "What are you doing here? I'm

carrying this bill." He was carrying the Chacon-Moscone Bill to have it renewed. It had sunset. I said, "Not on my watch." He said, "Well, you're not going to be there very long." So, the minute I came up for reconfirmation, I was not reconfirmed. So, I was off the State Board of Education. So, guess what? I was appointed by my supervisor on the County Board of Education. So, a supervisor cannot be – thought that I should be there and see what I can do. Well, I'm one of seven. So, you have to get four votes, and you don't do very much. Not only that, every district has its own board and is empowered to do whatever they're going to do. So, the county board just kind of oversees everything. We can't really impact policy.

MS: Well, we want to go back to San Pedro, and I think we will have to. Unfortunately, we are running out of time.

AP: Oh, you're right.

MS: We are almost done. One last question. You could sort of sum up for people who have never heard of San Pedro. What did San Pedro mean to you living here all these years – your life here? What does it mean to you? What is this place that you love obviously so much?

AP: San Pedro is a little piece of paradise if you want to look at it that way. There are seedy areas. But if you look at the ocean and you look at the hills behind San Pedro, the rolling hills behind San Pedro, and you look at these great big ships that come in the harbor and the people, you ask them a question and they'll give you a straight answer, or they'll help you. They'll give you the right directions. San Pedro is a little town that got a foot to the world, to the Orient. It's got a beach. It's got a yacht harbor. It's got everything you can imagine. Yes, you can go to Redondo, you can go to Long Beach, you can go to Manhattan Beach. There are many beautiful places in Santa Monica, beautiful places. But people are different in San Pedro. I don't know if it's their ethnic background. I don't know what it is but San Pedro is special.

[end of transcript]