

EI-1459
HEATHER MCKAY REBIC
BIRTHDATE: FEBRUARY 26, 1939
INTERVIEW DATE: JUNE 26, 2007
AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 68
RUNNING TIME: 1:27:15
INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.
RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: HALLIE BORSTEL
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

CANADA, 1949
AGE 10

SHIP:
PORT:

RESIDENCES

CANADA: HALIFAX, NS; NITRO, QC; MONTREAL, QC
US: TEXAS; BATON ROUGE, LA; PITTSBURGH, PA

LEVINE: Today is June the twenty-sixth the year 2007. I'm here in Forest Hills, which is a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and I'm with Heather Rebic, who came here a few times, at least (laughs) and – and one of those times she was taken to Ellis Island. And that was around when she was ten years old in 1949. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. And I'm going to let Heather tell her story as to why there's some confusion as to when you arrived in this country. Well, first – maybe first, if you would just say your birth date and where you were born.

REBIC: OK, I was born February 26, 1939 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

LEVINE: OK. And were you living in Halifax the whole time?

REBIC: No.

LEVINE: No.

REBIC: No, as a matter of fact, when I first came over under the strange circumstances I'm about to tell you, I was actually living in a village in Quebec.

LEVINE: Oh.

REBIC: I'm not a native Quebecan and, of course, obviously, was uncomfortable because I didn't speak French. But, for whatever reason, my mother—who was very much more comfortable in Halifax—decided after the death of my father, in the war, to take us to Quebec and I have no idea why she did that.

LEVINE: [superposed] Yeah.

REBIC: She took us to village called Nitro, believe it or not—

LEVINE: N-I-T-R-O?

REBIC: [superposed] N-I-T-R-O, just like nitroglycerin, which I'm assuming is – was the – the root word of the – of the village, and we lived there for I don't know how many years. But in any case, my mother and I, and my brother, who was twenty months younger than I, lived there probably until about 1949. So we went there when I was probably about six, maybe seven, to Nitro, because I don't – I don't know when I exactly left – left for – was I living. I was—

LEVINE: [superposed] Let's just say your mother's name.

REBIC: OK. My mother was Irene Laura Hawbolt McKay, at that time, when – in – my last name was McKay after my father, Alexander McKay.

LEVINE: How do you spell—

REBIC: [superposed] M-C capital K-A-Y.

LEVINE: And – and your mother's maiden name?

REBIC: Hawbolt. H-A-W-B-O-L-T.

LEVINE: And – and your father's name?

REBIC: Alexander Grant McKay, and he was from Aberdeen, Scotland.

LEVINE: Oh. OK. And – and you said he was in the Second World War.

REBIC: Yes. He was killed in the Second World War.

LEVINE: [superposed] World War. So you didn't—

REBIC: [superposed] Six – six weeks shy of my sixth birthday.

LEVINE: Ah. So do you remember him at all?

REBIC: Not very much, no.

LEVINE: Any memories at all?

REBIC: Little ones, but odd ones. I mean, I remember sitting and watching him shave himself holding the inevitable cigarette out of the corner of his mouth. And I do remember the fact that he was a classical music expert and very well – very articulate, also so fanatical about his – about his composition of how he spoke. Needless to say he had a Scottish accent, too, being from Aberdeen. He was a chief steward of b – in a – a line – a – a boat line, and had a lot of responsibility and I do remember the fact that any time he wrote notes to my brother or me, sometimes it would take two or three writings—he was so precise about expression.

LEVINE: Huh. How old was he when he immigrated?

REBIC: He didn't actually immigrate. In fact, he was still a Scotsman when he was flying for Canada. Remember, the Brits were all related—

LEVINE: Oh, right.

REBIC: [superposed] So even though he lived years in London—he was from Aberdeen—he lived long time in London, then became chief steward as part of an English steamship line. But he moved – I don't know why he came to Canada, I have no idea why, what brought him there—which is where he met my mother, obviously. He was about ten years older than my mother; they were married when my mother was twenty and he must've been thirty-something. And they were married and, as you may or may not know there was no draft in Canada. It was strictly voluntary. So, when he joined the service—which, by the way, was the RCAF, the Royal Canadian Air Force even though he was a Brit—he joined, for whatever reason, probably 'cause my mother was there and they were married, but, anyway he joined the RCAF and that's where he was flying, and obviously that's why he was killed.

LEVINE: So he – so he really volunteered to fight.

REBIC: Yes – yes.

LEVINE: When he really didn't have to.

REBIC: Right. Well, actually, the whole Second World War thing, the Canucks—anybody from Canada—was known for being ferocious fighters, and they were there because they chose to be there. So – and my dad was obviously—clearly—a man of extreme concern, I think, the number one at that point not a whole lot of people knew about the Holocaust. Certainly the governments did, the – and even the [not understood] troops did to a certain extent, but a lot of ordinary people didn't, but he didn't like the fact that the war was going – potentially could be going against what he felt was the right way of living. So I don't think his decision to go to war was popular with my mother, but it wasn't a whole lot that she could do about it. And it certainly ended up not being popular with me, for obvious reasons, 'cause he was killed. I was – would've been six years old six weeks after he was killed.

LEVINE: Wow. And he was killed flying over—

REBIC: [superposed] Yes, he was – he was a rear gunner. He was shot down over Germany, and only one person survived, no – nobody else survived.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: Their bodies were found and buried, ironically by a Catholic priest. I say ironically 'cause there wasn't one single Catholic aboard the plane that particular time. But he buried them all in a Catholic churchyard. They've since been reinterred in a British war graveyard, which is where he is now, and—

LEVINE: In – in—

REBIC: In Germany.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

REBIC: He's still in Germany. The thing, in fact, that bothered me about that for years, is that I had heard that European burial places were very limited—it's obviously a small place—and that, for whatever reason, some person told me that in fact, what ends up is that they end up losing the burial place and somebody else gets – he couldn't give me the explanation about what happens. So for years, years, I agonized over the potential of my brother's – or my father's body being lost somehow.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: And even though I would loved to have actually seen him again, live, it was good to know where he e – ended up. And that's – I know exactly the cemetery and everything, so—small comfort, I know, but—

LEVINE: Yeah, wow.

REBIC: [superposed] At least I know. My brother was twenty months younger than I, so he was just a little guy when my dad was killed, and – it – it was a very sad time. It actually ruined lots of lives. I'm sure it was extra-hard for my mother—my mother was only in her late twenties when it happened. She was very bright, very beautiful, very articulate and all that stuff, but you're still stuck with two kids. [slapping sound] I'm sure she didn't say she was stuck with two kids—

LEVINE: [superposed] Right.

REBIC: But the point being she was. All by herself, and, it's true that the Canadian government was, and probably still is, extremely generous in terms of how they support widows and children. In other words, there's no requirement that mothers are going to have to go to work and find a job because the various moneys sent to the survivors of people killed in the war, at least at that time, were quite generous.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: So – she wasn't – she wasn't in any financial stress. But why we ended up in Quebec I have no clue. She at one time had lived in Quebec, but in Montreal, which is a much more sophisticated city, but my one – my brother was born there. But how we ended up in this little village I have no clue.

LEVINE: Wow.

REBIC: No clue. Anyway, we moved from there (LEVINE coughs), went for a time—after my mother married my stepfather—she – we moved for a time to a house in Montreal with a woman friend of my father's. And she owned the house but she also rented out rooms—it's actually a beautiful house—and – all kinds of room, and from there we en – is where we actually ended up coming to the States, but in a couple of different ways. And I don't know all of them, I just remember the – the one – well, I remember two ways, actually. But the up-shot was that for many years, I never realized—and by the way, it's been straightened out—that I was here illegally. But I am here legally now, and I'm a citizen, so that's not going to be a problem.

LEVINE: (laughs) OK, good. Well, was your step-father American?

REBIC: Yes, he was. And I think, even – 'cause I remember hearing discussions

between them at times, a lot of Americans then, and probably to this – to a certain extent now, believe that if they're Americans they have this huge power to do things that, in fact, legally they can't. And I remember his argument was that because my mother—a – a Canadian—had married him, there should be an automatic almost citizenship, and therefore anything else would be c – conferred on us, because we're minor children. Well, of course, that simply isn't true, nor was it true then. And I don't know whether he didn't know the truth about – my – my step-father was an engineer, by the way, if that's relevant, I don't know, but he was an engineer whose job was to build rather interesting buildings all over the country and all over Canada, which is where my mother had met him. So, he was not a – he wasn't a stupid man, in other words.

LEVINE: Mhm. Well, I mean, I don't know when the law changed, but that was true at one point.

REBIC: [superposed] Well, up to a point it was – up to a – up to a point. But he couldn't come in here illegally and be – and have that conferred. In other words, he should've gone through some kind of legal stuff just to take us in here and he did not do that, and I think it probably was ignorance.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: But, you know, certainly if you are married to an American citizen, your time to wait to become a citizen is shorter than if you come over on your – by yourself. But you still have to deal with legalities (laughs). You have to do that kind of stuff before you, you know, and clearly, that's – that's how we ended up going to Ellis Island. Not – not with any knowledge for sure that that was going to happen, but – but the s – s – the surprise was that we ended up in Ellis Island by just flying over to the States.

LEVINE: OK, so, the first time you came—which you don't exactly remember when—

REBIC: [superposed] Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Did you stay here for a while?

REBIC: It's hard to des – no, actually we didn't, because the big thing is when we lived in Nitro, one of the things that we did frequently, in fact, is that my mother would take us by train to New York to go to movies. And I know that sounds bizarre, but at one time there was a major disastrous the – a theatre fire in Montreal where several children were killed. So legally, it was not – we were not able to go to a movie in Quebec because we were too little. The irony being you could get married but you couldn't go to a – to a movie by the time you were, like, eighteen or whatever. But, so, we frequently went back and forth to – to New – but we had the usual papers—there was not a problem. And I don't know whether they extended that or what, but I know when my mother married McLean—who was an American—the assumption was, by him at least, that there would be no problem doing the usual kinds of things. My mother had the paperwork necessary to take us back and forth, but not to reside permanently.

LEVINE: [superposed] Not to stay.

REBIC: So, anyway, our trip to stay in Montreal after we left Nitro and stayed for a while in Montreal probably was a preliminary to moving to the States, but of course I was too little to know that. I was probably maybe eight, nine at the most, when that whole thing took place. I was ten when they were married. And they left—I know I was still living in Nitro at that time because they left me and my brother Pete to fly to Texas to be married. And the reason I remember that I was still in Nitro at the time is because that's where I learned to knit. This lovely woman who was babysitting us taught me how to knit—

well, that's why I remember that so clearly.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: So it was after that that they, you know—and, again, I was ten years old at that point—and we went to Montreal and stayed with my father's friend. Auntie Flo, we used to call her. Really interesting French woman. But from there a couple of attempts were made, but nev – nowhere was it – nowhere was it presented as a permanent coming to the States. And this whole thing about the Ellis Island landing—remember, I – being as young as I was, would not have been involved in any of the discussions about what we're going to do. I know that there were times – excuse me. I know there were times that there were discussions relative to the legalities of his position in relation to my mother and to us, but I never, obviously, wasn't around to hear the final thing. How it was that he was in the States someplace—probably involved in one of the things he was building—was the – my assumption now is that we were supposed to – after we left New York, 'cause we flew into one of the airports—from Montreal—to one of the airports in New York, and we were therefore supposed to join him wherever he was at the time. But what interrupted that was—and I don't know what alerted them—but all of the sudden these authorities showed up and said no way, Jose, and we ended up in Ellis Island, which, to this day I've never understood.

LEVINE: Well, now were you traveling – was your mother with you?

REBIC: Yes.

LEVINE: Your mother and your brother?

REBIC: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So you flew into New York thinking you were going to join step-father somewhere—

REBIC: [superposed] Wherever it was. Exactly.

LEVINE: And instead the authorities said—

REBIC: [superposed] Yes.

LEVINE: You're illegally here, or whatever.

REBIC: Yes. But what I don't understand and never will understand is why weren't we just sent back? Why were we kept at Ellis Island? Overnight, only, by the way, and then we went back home.

LEVINE: OK, so it was 1949. Do you remember anything about Ellis Island?

REBIC: Oh, God, yes.

LEVINE: Oh, good (laughs).

REBIC: Oh, God, yes.

LEVINE: [superposed] OK, let's hear it.

REBIC: Well, the big thing, of course, was the immense place. The one thing is, there were not many people there. And, of course, I – when they said Ellis Island, I guess I had read something—I read everything that I got in front of me, they didn't dare but a cereal box in front of my if I had to go some – I would read it. So I read somewhere about Ellis Island, but, obviously, had no reason to absorb a whole bunch about it 'cause I wasn't going to Ellis Island.

But, we were taken into this place – everybody was very nice to us, by the way, but there was really nobody there, so apparently nobody – no other immigrants were around. And I didn't consider myself an immigrant because I was only from Canada—

LEVINE: [superposed] Right.

REBIC: That's not that far—I could walk across the border. But, anyway, they took us, and it must've been – I know that was – it was still light out, because I remember they took us to this absolutely huge room—there had to have been hundred beds in there anyway, all by ourselves, there was no one else in there.

LEVINE: Oh, my gosh.

REBIC: So that's going to give you a good indication of where we were, immigration-wise. Anyway, they took us into this room—my mother and I, and my brother—my brother is able to detach himself from things much more than I am. My mother looked nervous but not any more than you'd expect, because she wasn't expecting that either. I was terrified. It left me, in fact, with a permanent fear that someday I was going to be sent to jail.

LEVINE: Oh.

REBIC: To this day I – I can tell you that if I were put in jail – I would just lose it. And that was the thing, even though they were very nice to us.

LEVINE: Now, did – did you – did it have a jail-like—

REBIC: Oh, yeah, it – the thing that made it jail-like – thing about it was not even the room, although the room's size, and the beds, in—which, by the way, were

beautifully made, I mean, they're all neat.

LEVINE: Were they all bunk beds?

REBIC: Yeah. No, not bunk beds, but the large, like, single-type beds.

LEVINE: Cots, like, kind of.

REBIC: Yes, like cots. But each one had a sh – blanket, and the whole nine yards. (clears throat) 'Scuse me. (coughs) But at one point we were shown this room and told to put our stuff down and whatever and that everything was going to be straightened out, and, again I was just terrified. I was a pretty nervous little kid anyway, but, also I – I was a little girl—little girls do that. And I could see that my mother didn't know what was going on. My brother was kind of detached, but that's pretty much the way Pete is. [not understood] I mean, he may be a genius but he is detached. But, anyhow, at that point the matron, I guess is what she was, although – that's what it seemed liked to me, some – a woman and a man were there also, the woman was more involved with us probably because we were little kids, and – but anyway, she told us where to put our stuff and that we would be eating soon. Oh, and [not understood] well, we aren't hungry, we don't want to eat. So I'm thinking to myself at the time—and I didn't say anything 'cause she just – didn't answer my mother back, never conferred anything but agreement. I remember holding my hand up like, wait a second, but I wasn't a great eater anyway, so it probably just a matter that I probably wanted to get out of that room, figuring that would be a way to do it—I certainly wasn't hungry. But I remember saying to the woman as she was exiting, and it seemed like we were in the middle of this room 'cause she had to walk ages to get to the door, and I yelled after, "I have to go to the bathroom." And she said, "Well, not now." And I said, "But I have to go to the bathroom badly." I mean, I was a little kid, little kids have to go to the bathroom now. And I said, "But I have

to go badly.” She said, “I’m sorry, you’ll have to wait.” And she left – the door, and honest to God, I’m sure she didn’t slam it, it was just a big door, but all I heard was this crash sound of the door. So I ran to the door thinking, “Oh, I’m going to—” and it was locked.

LEVINE: Ah.

REBIC: Just absolutely terrified me. And I’m pounding on the door like mad, and my mother’s looking – she’s sitting on one of the beds, and so is my brother, sitting on another bed, obviously completely overwhelmed—and my mother didn’t get overwhelmed easily. She usually could rise to the fore and do something about what it was – but sh – obviously, completely unexpected. So, I’m still pounding like mad, and, of course, I start crying. And not long after that, that matron came back – I – I shouldn’t call her m – maybe she’s not called a matron, I don’t know.

LEVINE: [superposed] I think that would be appropriate.

REBIC: [superposed] But to me it was—

LEVINE: [superposed] Yeah.

REBIC: To me it was a matron, ‘cause it was a jail to me.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: Anyway, she came back about, I don’t know, a few minutes later. And she said, “OK, I’ll take you to the bathroom.” So we – and my mother said, “No, you will not take my daughter. I have to go with her.” And I understand that from a perspective, not wanting your kid to go anywhere else, and she said, “No, you cannot go.” So there I was, my mother and my brother are left in

this room, and she's taking me where? As it turned out, it was just to the bathroom, and she just stood at the bathroom and wa – just made sure that I was safe, really. I mean, she was a very nice person, it's just that – but anyway, went back to the room after I used the bathroom, and then, of course, my mother said, "Well, what about washing up? What about changing, what about sleeping?" Whatever. And she – the woman said, "All of that will have to be done here." And, of course, you look at the back of the room and they had, looked like just sinks.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: But nothing elaborate or anything, just a sink and whatever. And my mother said, "Well, when are we getting out of here?" Like, I – I can't sleep here. And the matron said, "Yes, you will be sleeping here."

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: So, naturally – and my brother is just still – thin – well, I guess I could do that. But he doesn't say anything about the meal or anything, and I do not remember eating, which is interesting, so it may very well be that my mother saying, "Well, we don't want to eat," may, in fact, have involved not eating. Because I don't remember anybody coming back, and I don't remember going anywhere to eat. I do remember the next morning waking up—I have no idea what time—but I remember the next morning waking up with, I don't think it was the same matron, I thi – I know it was a woman, but I don't think it was the same one, 'cause the woman that I'm talking about was a big woman, and I remember this one being much more my mother's size. And she came in and she said, "Please get your stuff gathered up." OK. And we went and all of the sudden we were taken out and we were taken back to the airport and flown – we flew back home.

LEVINE: My goodness. Now, do you think your mother knew what the problem was?

REBIC: I – I don't know. No, I don't know. I think the big thing – she might've surmised it, relative to how this had gone on, but I think that she was buying into my step-father's belief that, in fact, because he was an American, nothing would be a problem. So I don't know. But it also may be that she just chose not to share it with me because I was a little kid, or with Pete, so – so I actually don't know whether or not she knew. I know that – I know there was an argument next time we saw each other. Because, again, we went back to Montreal to my Auntie Flo's house, and there must've been some conversation that dictated that McLean come back—McLean was my step-father—

LEVINE: Is that his first name, or—

REBIC: No. John R. McLean was his – was his last name.

LEVINE: M-C—

REBIC: M-C capital L-E-A-N. But, anyway, he was wherever he was, and I think it was Texas, which is where he was, probably working on something there. But anyway, he ended up coming back—'cause he came back to Montreal. And I remember that there was an argument, but whenever there was an argument my mother tried to make sure we were out of the room, so I wasn't necessarily privy to that argument. And I'm gathering that – I can't be sure whether or not anything was settled in terms of how we were actually going to go back there, but I do remember, at one point, being smuggled across in a truck, at night, with a man that had watches all up his arms. (LEVINE laughs) And I said to McLean—my step-father—and I said, "He's got whole bunches of watches. Why does he have so many watches?" And McLean said to me, "Don't offer to buy any of them." (both laugh) And I said, "But they're really

nice watches.” And he said, “Heather, please.” So clearly this was the guy running this smuggling thing, and—

LEVINE: Was this after the Ellis Island thing?

REBIC: Yeah, this was after the Ellis Island thing. Now, I don't know, to tell you the truth, I don't know whether this was the final time that we came to the States. That I can't remember. So I don't know whether in fact that whole experience was where my illegality truly originated or what. And I did not know I was here illegally. I mean, you figure I lived in the States—in Texas, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania for years—and it wasn't until I was a young mother with a year old child that the immigration officials showed up at my door and said, “Guess what? You're here illegally and you're going back to Canada.” And it turns out that my brother Pete who also did not know he was here illegally had tried to join the Air Force here, and that's when he found – that's literally when we found out we weren't here legally.

LEVINE: Oh, my gosh.

REBIC: It was awful, because then I had to go through this huge problem of—by the way, I had to mention Ellis Island—I had to go through this whole routine of getting all of my facts and everything together in order to present when I went over. I had to literally go back to Canada to straighten out my immigration status, which means I understand what's going on now with the various Hispanic stuff. And – because I literally had to go back to get all the immigration stuff after, oh, so much communication, and at that point I had a year-and-a-half year old daughter, who was American, obviously, 'cause she – and so was my husband, but I kept being threatened that they were going to make sure I was separated from my daughter and my husband.

LEVINE: Oh, my gosh.

REBIC: It was really nasty. I mean, it was truly nasty stuff. And they kept saying – and I said, “Well, you can’t do that.” I said, “Number one, I’m her mother.” “Well, we’ll not only separate you but we’ll make sure we’ll even take her away from you.” Now, he – they never said anything like that around my – around my husband, they wouldn’t have dared, but obviously that’s not legally something that could’ve been done. But it was just like one more thing they were heaping on the – on the pile of – of terrible stuff. I know at one point the Ellis Island thing came into question, and I couldn’t understand that ‘cause I said to—I think it was when I went back to Toronto to straighten things out—but I was at an American embassy, which is where I had to go, and they asked me about Ellis Island. I said, “Well, number one, how do you know about Ellis Island? ‘Cause it’s not relevant.” I said, “That was a here and back – that wasn’t part of anything.” “Well, we wanted to make sure that you actually went back to Canada.” I said, “I was a little kid! How could I possibly be in charge of where I was going?” “Well, we just needed to know.”

LEVINE: Was your mother alive when – when the immigration officials were threatening to send—

REBIC: [superposed] Oh, yeah. But she had – at that point my mother had basically destroyed her brain by drinking.

LEVINE: Oh.

REBIC: And then she was a – in fact, she ended up dying of – had neck cancer about – relative probably to the extreme smoking and drinking that she did. [papers rustling] And – which, by the way, is my nursing specialty, which I think is interesting. But – and that’s not why I chose it, I already was a nurse in head and neck oncology before my mother got – got sickness. But she and I had stopped communicating or anything—her choice, by the way, not mine—and

again, I honestly believe that she fried her brain in all the drink.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

REBIC: So a lot of the stuff that I normally would have talked to her about—

LEVINE: Right.

REBIC: I didn't have access to that information.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: And she, by the way, is – was also affected by the same thing, she was here obviously illegally as I was, but it didn't have the same impact because she had a lot more money than I did.

LEVINE: Was she threatened to be – was it threatened to her to be sent back—

REBIC: [superposed] No.

LEVINE: When they were threatening you?

REBIC: Nope. Nope. 'Cause she could buy her way out of it. That's the sad thing about it. My brother didn't have any – God knows he didn't have any money, so he just went back to Canada and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force, and I stayed here for obvious reasons and decided I would try to straighten out my immigration status. And my mother hired an attorney who could put her in the right connections—she never went back to Canada to straighten everything out, in fact was here many more years before she finally died, in the States, married to her third husband.

LEVINE: Oh. Well, now, do you think it was your brother's attempt to join the Air Force here that tipped off the officials?

REBIC: [superposed] Oh, yeah, I do. Yes, I do. And the big thing is, my brother Pete was extremely apologetic, 'cause, of course, he said, "I didn't know." I said, "Well, I didn't know either."

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: And I said, "And I—" and he said, "Well, did Mom know?" And I said, "I don't think she did." Although I don't know. Ah – well, he was closer to her than I was, for whatever reason, and I said, "Well, why don't you just ask her?"

LEVINE: Did he?

REBIC: [superposed] And I s – and – and he – and he didn't.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: Because I don't think he wanted to know.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: And I understand, I mean, I understand a boy's relationship with his mother is different from a girl's, I understand that, but it pissed me off regardless (both laugh).

LEVINE: Wow. So – so did you get any satisfaction when you were trying to straighten things out at the American Embassy, back in—

REBIC: [superposed] No, actually, in fact, the interesting thing at that point to me was, this whole thing, they – they spoke to me—‘cause there was a – there was a group that did – that took care of just that kind of thing, any time there were issues about immigration, that particular group in the Embassy. So, in other words, you didn’t talk to people who were just interested in protocol and that sort of thing, you talked to this group, including a doctor and all that kind of stuff that were just interested in the details about immigration. But they were not very nice.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: And including – there was a doctor who literally tried to feel his way up my body, and then finally I told him just to quit it.

LEVINE: Huh.

REBIC: And he said, “Well, I have to do this.” I said, “You do not have to do this.” I said, “Number one, if I had TB you’d still have to let me into the country, right?” “Well, yeah, that’s true.” I said, “Well, what the hell are you I – I – looking up my leg?”

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: “Well, OK.” And he starts signing my papers. But then we went through all of that routine and we came back over the border and my br – my brother – my husband was staying in the car with our daughter, ‘cause, of course, that’s a long trip.

LEVINE: So your husband and your daughter were on the American side of the border—

REBIC: No, they came right across with me.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

REBIC: 'Cause I wanted to make sure I – I knew they couldn't do anything legally to either one of them.

LEVINE: Right.

REBIC: Th – the – all the paperwork and everything was perfectly OK with them, they just happened to accompany me, obviously. And on the way back from Toronto my husband stayed in the car with Mikey—my daughter—and I went in to – to straighten out all the papers and all, 'cause you had to hand over this mass of papers—it had taken to two years to acquire. It was such a – an ordeal that if you – everything that you turned over to them had to be at least – no longer than six months old. In other words, if you'd gotten a – a – a statement or whatever that's a year old, you have to go through the whole thing again. That's police reports and everything from every city that I ev – ever lived in.

LEVINE: So, yeah, I was going to ask you, what did they ask you to provide?

REBIC: Everything, it – a history of yourself. In – in always related to your school and your – any policed places you lived, and – you'd have to figure that I – when I graduated from high school—which is twelve years, right? Thirteen years counting kindergarten. I'd gone to fourteen different schools.

LEVINE: Oh, no. And – and – so you had to provide from the schools in Canada, and also—

REBIC: [superposed] School – every – everywhere I'd gone, it – from the age of sixteen, I think. From the age sixteen. 'Cause I guess you're more likely to get in trouble at the age of sixteen than you are at, like, twelve. But, anyway, so I had – I had to write to all police departments—and, of course, I'm thinking to myself, now, is this this parish? This – the whole complex idea of counties and parishes and all that kind of stuff—provinces and whatever—you get – well – what – does this belong here, or does this belong – who paid attention? So I had this mass of papers that were all current and all legal and all that kind of stuff [papers rustling] and I get to this border guard type person. And he looks through my paper—flip, flip, flip, flip, flip—like, you know, he's not really looking, and he says, "Just so you know, sometimes this stuff gets lost."

LEVINE: Boy, you really—

REBIC: [superposed] Well, I don't have – I really – I mean – I – I c – I – I just burst in – I mean, I was just hysterical, I was crying to hard, and I'm normally not a person—and, in fact, my mother w – you don't lose control in public, never lose con – don't ever cry, etcetera—but I just lost it. And I – I came out crying, 'cause, of course, I had to leave the papers there and I'm crying, sobbing. My husband asked what was wrong, needless to say he took matters in his own h – I though he was going to kill the guy. He walks rights back in and, of course, he at least was an American, as this guy was, and he basically threatened him. And, of course, the guy wouldn't have had a leg to stand on, 'cause he'd have to understand what had stimulated this threat. "Oh, well, we'll take care of whatever." Needless to say, is it all had to end up back in Pittsburgh, through this whole—

LEVINE: Now, wait, where – where did – where were you—

REBIC: [superposed] Niagara.

LEVINE: [superposed] When the guard said that things might get lost?

REBIC: Niagara.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

REBIC: We made the border crossing—we had gone over Niagara to – to Toronto and the only thing good about that was we got fish and chips, but that's (both laugh). But anyway, all the papers that I turned in to him—and I'm talking this mass of papers, 'cause even though some of them had expired because of the six month thing, I put them all together anyway, thinking what you're looking at that I – I – I'm kind of compulsive anyway, but I would put everything relevant to that particular police department or that ple – police station or what are all together so they would see I've been communicating for all this time. So I've got this pounds of paper that inevitably, I guess, would be – somebody would look at, I'm s – assuming. But the ultimate fate of it was to go from this Niagara station to be transported back to the immigration people here in Pittsburgh.

LEVINE: Were you and your husband living Pittsburgh?

REBIC: Yes.

LEVINE: I see.

REBIC: Yes. In fact, in – in Squirrel Hill.

LEVINE: Oh.

REBIC: And – the point being, of course, that I kept waiting to find out that, in fact, it hadn't arrived. I was scared to death, 'cause I th – I can't go through this again, I just can't deal with this. Plus, of course, I'm still dealing with this threat that my baby is going to be taken away.

LEVINE: [superposed] Yeah.

REBIC: It – I know that wouldn't have happened—now I know that—but when, you know, somebody in authority threatening you, you don't – you don't know any other way to think about it. I mean, I was only, like, twenty-one, twenty-two years old, I mean, I was a kid. And then when I finally got issued a alien number—at least I knew I was safe in that respect. So, I waited the ma – whatever, it was five years of whatever before I applied for citizenship, and that was not a problem, and I did become a citizen, and I am a citizen. But I have a certain sympathy for anybody who is trying to get across the border—

LEVINE: [superposed] Yeah.

REBIC: (laughs) [not understood] Whether they have any watches on their arms is beside the point (both laugh).

LEVINE: So, let's see. So you – you eventually got all that paperwork—

REBIC: [superposed] Yup.

LEVINE: Sent to you in Pittsburgh.

REBIC: It got sent to the immigration people, and that's why I was issued an alien number.

LEVINE: Ah.

REBIC: But, of course, you don't know that, 'cause nobody calls you and says, "Guess what, your papers arrived."

LEVINE: How long did it take from the time you were in Niagara—

REBIC: [superposed] Oh, mon – months. Months. Which again, is a t – is a typical thing of the slow speed of anything moving through the bureaucracy that we know and love. But, the point being, there is no way for somebody going through that to ascertain that, in fact, that's what's happening, because you call—nobody has seen anything.

LEVINE: Mhm. Yeah.

REBIC: [superposed] It's true, they're not saying, "OK, you've got to back again," but, by the same token, you have no guarantee that they're not going to come back and say, "Guess what, you're going to go back again."

LEVINE: Mm.

REBIC: And I understand – the other thing that bothers me, in a way, because the people who have come over from Mexico who I feel bad for, I really for awful for—'cause I understand them better than the average person does, but a lot of people also don't realize, I guess, they come from Guatemala or even s – through Europe—they don't have to go back. Only countries contingent to the United States borders have to go over.

LEVINE: Have to go back?

REBIC: Mhm. In other words, you're from Mexico or Canada, you have to go back and straighten out your immigration, you're out further than that, don't worry

about it, we'll straighten it by mail. Is that fair? No, it's not. But it also – it does, obviously, describe what could happen with the – up – I'm gathering a vast number of illegal immigrants right now are Mexicans—which means, they technically do have to go back to Mexico, a point that I well understand. I didn't agree with it, but I understood it.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: Except it really aggravated me that – why do I have to go back to Canada, but if I'm from England I don't have to? Just because it – the border doesn't touch? Is that fair?

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: And this makes no sense to me at all. Just like Hispanics that are not literally connected to the country would not have to go back and straighten out, they can do it by mail. But anybody who's here from Mexico, forget it. You're in big trouble. Or if you came through c – from Canada, same thing. It just – and every time I hear immigration, I think, ugh, just all over again. It bothers me because part of me is not in sympathy—certainly the part that says the only reason we want these people here is because they work cheaper. I mean, that's exploitation of the person as well as us, the – the taxpayer. But, by the same token, I don't also want anybody to go through what I went through, if it can be done simply—like by mail. And cheaply. It's a whole lot cheaper to have to do that than to go all the way back and all that way back here. And I don't – I don't want to spend the money, I don't think anybody else should.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: You know. And I don't want anybody threatened.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: I mean, that was – and even that whole Ellis Island – the whole Ellis Island thing, as I said, still, to this day, has an impact on me. And even in how you think of the whole thing, everybody, I guess, is in sympathy to a certain extent when the release somebody who was in jail when he should've have been—like, if they were convicted and they weren't guilty.

LEVINE: [superposed] Yeah, right. Right.

REBIC: I s – have huge, huge sympathy for that. For obvious reasons. Because I think to myself, "How would I handle that?" All I can remember is that [snaps] clatter of the door of the Ellis Island room. It was just [breathes out] terrifying.

LEVINE: Do you have any sense of whether you were in a building adjoining the main building—like with that big hall with the balcony—

REBIC: [superposed] No, I don't.

LEVINE: Did it have a balcony around it?

REBIC: No, I don't remember – only thing – we were shown – went through – see, I can't remember how – I know we were taken there by car, obviously, but I remember there was water there, but we weren't in the water. And we were driven by car, and we went in—seemed like it was a huge building. But I don't remember whether it was anything – let's face it, it was something that a little kid is not going to necessarily pay attention to. I just remember that there was this mass of hallways that we walked on before we came to this enormous room. And everything – there was nobody there other than these

two people who worked there. Just this huge building with these enormous hallways and this room.

LEVINE: See, because, there is a small bridge from New Jersey, but I'm – I have always been under the impression that it was built when they were restoring the museum—

REBIC: [superposed] Yeah.

LEVINE: Which would've been after—

REBIC: Yeah – yeah.

LEVINE: So, if you went by car, I'm wondering if you went someplace else. Because—

REBIC: See, I don't remember specifically, I just remember being in car, but I don't remember if we went in a car to someplace else. In other words, from the airport, we went into a car.

LEVINE: Oh, right, absolutely.

REBIC: But – but I don't remember—

LEVINE: [superposed] But then you would've taken a ferry to get to Ellis.

REBIC: [superposed] Well, that's what – probably, yes.

LEVINE: Yeah, probably.

REBIC: [superposed] But the thing that I remember is being in the car, but I don't remember it being a long trip or anything, I just remember being in a car.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

REBIC: I just also remember being so scared, 'cause we had no id – they didn't say where we were going, they just told us we had to get in the car.

LEVINE: So – wow. Were – were people – were people nice to you then, when they were taking you to Ellis?

REBIC: They – they were, but they were kind of officious.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: You know, as if I'm going to attack them for taking me to this place, and they were not very good as far as information, 'cause I basic – was – as a little kid, "But where am I going?"

LEVINE: Yeah, right.

REBIC: And – "Over there," or whatever. And they did tell me the name. The only reason I remember the Ellis Island [not understood]—

LEVINE: 'Cause they said it.

REBIC: They said it. And I said, "Ellis Island?" And I remember saying to them, "Why are we going there?" I s – I absolutely remember asking that and not getting an answer. I don't think they knew why I was being sent there.

LEVINE: [superposed] Probably not.

REBIC: So they didn't know how to respond, for obvious reasons. And I never will be able to understand why we were taken – I think it's probably somebody screwed up. I don't think we were supposed to be taken there at all, I think we probably should've been put on a sh – on a plane home.

LEVINE: [superposed] Plane back, right. Did – did – so you didn't meet, like, with a legal type?

REBIC: No.

LEVINE: At Ellis Island?

REBIC: [superposed] No. No.

LEVINE: No.

REBIC: No. The big thing was this huge room and I don't remember eating so I don't think we ate, once again, my mother said, "Forget it, we don't want to eat." We didn't. And I do remember that that room—that huge room—had this – these couple little sinks, and the water was running. And I also remember that it was clean.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: I also remember that every bed was made precisely—almost in a military fanc – fashion—the old bouncing your – your coin on it routine. And – and I actually remember also the fact that my mother, for whatever reason, had chosen a room that, I swear to God, if you measured it, it was precisely in the middle of this one row. And, naturally, it was going to be which one am I supposed to take now? (laughs) Uh, well, what if I was slightly off center? But I remember the sinks because at one point, after I'd gone to the bathroom

and this whole routine about washing up, and thinking to myself, “Well, that must mean where we drink our water.” So I went over and there were actually, like, cup things there, I remember that ‘cause I remember drawing the water, and I also remember thinking to myself, “I can’t wash in this little sink.” ‘Cause, of course, I was a bath person, you know. “I can’t wash in this little sink, God forbid.” And I remember – I don’t remember washing that night, which is interesting, but I remember drinking water from the – the tap.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: So obviously everything was turned on, but I also remember the enormous size and the beautifully made beds. I mean, they weren’t luxurious beds—

LEVINE: Right.

REBIC: But the precision of the place, it was just like, that must’ve been if ever they brought anybody questionable—like we must’ve been—that’s where they took them, although not another group came in while we were there.

LEVINE: Well, I’m thinking that you may have stayed in the building that the Coast Guard used—

REBIC: [superposed] Mhm.

LEVINE: When they were stationed there during World War Two.

REBIC: Oh, that’s interesting.

LEVINE: That’s what—

REBIC: [superposed] That’s very interesting.

LEVINE: That's just what I'm thinking.

REBIC: Yeah.

LEVINE: And that would account for the military—

REBIC: [superposed] Mhm.

LEVINE: Kind of look of the beds and the—

REBIC: [superposed] That many beds in a room?

LEVINE: And there's a huge building with—

REBIC: [superposed] Yeah.

LEVINE: That they used with a lot beds in it.

REBIC: [superposed] Interesting, interesting.

LEVINE: So, I think that would be – the other possibility is that they did intern at enemy aliens during World War Two (both laugh). Italians, Germans, and Japanese were probably using that building.

REBIC: [superposed] Yeah – yeah. Isn't that interesting.

LEVINE: But, you said few little things about your mother over the course of this, but how – can you say any more about either her temperament—her personality—and anything about how she dealt with all of this?

REBIC: The interesting thing is that she was atypically responding.

LEVINE: Oh.

REBIC: And the reason I say that is – as I mentioned to you before, my mother was very bright, very well-read, very articulate. If you had offended her or pissed her off in any way, you would've heard it. And she didn't react that way. And I guess I kept expecting her – but I think what she was doing is that I think she was being cautious, not wanting to anger somebody that may have some ramifications—it may not have been a true thing—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

REBIC: But I think this was so completely overwhelming. Clearly she wasn't expecting this or anything remotely like it, and she didn't know how to explain it to us—she could see us standing and looking at her like, “Duh, what's going on?” And part of her didn't know what to respond to and I think the other part was caution. Because the very fact that she didn't ream somebody out—

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: Bespeaks that emotion. I just think – number one, she did look a little bit worried, for obvious reasons, because I think literally nobody – nobody told me, at least not around me – not around all of us that, other than the one woman said, “Well, you'll be leaving tomorrow.” But other than that we hadn't heard any time thing. And I think she might've had the same thing that I did—that it was a jail.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: And I think she also might've been very angry at McLean, because technically he would've been responsible for this whole thing being put in place—not that he would've known where – I think he just assumed we would just be scooting fo – through. The other thing I don't understand is where were we supposed to go after the airport. Where had – was there anything planned? Was somebody supposed to pick us up, were we supposed to fly someplace else? I don't know.

LEVINE: So what happened when you left?

REBIC: We just went back to Montreal—same airport there that we had left from to go to New York. And we went to—I said this—woman friend of my father's, who desperately wanted to adopt my brother Pete but not me.

LEVINE: (laughs) Aw.

REBIC: She just wanted a little boy, that's the only thing—she had no children at all. She s – she was really interesting—

LEVINE: Yeah, te – say something about her. What was she like?

REBIC: [superposed] She was really interesting, she actually – her name was Flo, and I remember making a huge error at one time. For some strange reason, she wasn't comfortable around little kids 'cause she had no children—in fact, she actually wasn't married, she was living with the most interesting chef. He was a French chef from one of the major restaurants and Montreal, and as you – if you know anything about Montreal—

LEVINE: [superposed] Yeah, I do.

REBIC: You know that's a – that's a pretty big deal. So anyway, he lived in this house – with a huge house that's used as a – as a rooming house, but she was a fanatical woman about – I mean, everything was so tidy and so precise and everything. And most of them were single men that lived there, I don't know where they worked, and it wasn't – wasn't important for me to know, but anyway, every once in a while then she would start a conversation with us— and she was French but she spoke English, obviously. And I remember her approaching the subject about names one time. And I thought to myself, "Why does she want to know this?" you know. 'Cause again, she had met my dad when he was in the shipping thing, and I don't know the exact details. They weren't romantically involved, they just were friends. But she asked me one time (laughs) about names, and she said "What's your favorite name?" And I said, "I don't really have a favorite name." I said, "I don't like my own name, but it's—" you know. And she said, "Well, what do you think about the name Florence?" And I remember saying, "Oh, my God, that's a terrible name." And she said, "Heather, that's my name." I said, "Your name's Flo." She said, "It's the nickname." I said, "Oh, my God, I'm so sorry, Aunt Flo, I'm so sorry." To this day I can't hear the name Florence that I don't think of that. By the way, stepping on toes—

LEVINE: Well, maybe that's why she used Flo, she didn't like it either (laughs).

REBIC: [superposed] She didn't like it either. But I had a laugh because I – ever after that I would just be so apologetic when I would be around and she – she didn't expect that, it wasn't that, she was just curious. 'Cause she – I think she wanted to get – she wanted to know Alex—that's my father—kids better. Since she didn't know any of us.

LEVINE: Well, that's kind of a nice thing to do with a child, like, what's your favorite name?

REBIC: [superposed] Yeah. What's your favorite—

LEVINE: What's your favorite color? You know.

REBIC: [superposed] Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: And I fell right into it. (both laugh) Don't ask me a question you don't want to know that answer to, I used to say, and it's still pretty relevant (LEVINE laughs). 'Cause you'll – you'll hear the answer, whether you like it or not. You can judge later.

LEVINE: Well, now, when did you – when did you meet up with your step-father after that incident?

REBIC: I don't know. And the reason I say I don't know is because – no, actually, it had to have been. He had to have flown back from wherever he was—where we were supposed to go—because we weren't back in Montreal for long before I – and we were eating out in a really odd, like, hotel restaurant kind of thing, not in Montreal—it must've been someplace that McLean knew from when he was building the atomic plant, by the way, that's what he was building, right – even though it's the middle of Quebec, that's what he was building when my mother met him. But, anyway, he evidently knew this restaurant thing from when he was working there, so he – and he liked the food, and it was very traditional French food. So we were eating at that place and it became obvious that the symptoms that I had been having for days which I kind of failed to my mother about were getting more and more serious, so she calls our pediatrician who, believe it or not, came to this dining room to examine me. And I remember being stretched across two chairs, mortified. I was this unbelievably dignified little ten-year-old. Anyway,

I remember being examined on this – and being sent to the hospital in – back at Valleyfield, which was the city right outside of Nitro, but it was the only real hospital that apparently was close by. And I had an emergency appendectomy in a French-speaking hospital. Only one could sp – one nun could speak English. I had a fairly good command of French at that time, just ‘cause that’s what I used while I lived in Nitro, but McLean was there then. What we did then I was I left the hospital after X number of days—after I had pneumonia, too—and went back to Montreal to stay with my Auntie Flo in the same house, and I know McLean was there, but I don’t know whether that’s where I wa – I know I had to stay there for a while, just, obviously, to recuperate from the surgery. And so it must’ve been weeks, and I remember McLean was there during that time.

LEVINE: As were your mother and brother.

REBIC: [superposed] Yes. Right. And then – and I stayed with Auntie Flo while they would do whatever they were doing, so I wasn’t conscious of what else was going on as far as social life of my mother. But I know that at that point – there was never the intention for us to stay there permanently—in Auntie Flo’s house. It was strictly a pass-over kind of thing. We were going to be there as long as – and then we were going wherever. And I don’t remember whether that’s where the watches-man was contacted, with fairly amazes me—and still does, now, the more I thought about that the more amazed I get. McLean obviously knew how to contact somebody. Where all – you don’t just go in the phone book and say, “Man with watches, will you transport my family across the border?” Isn’t that crazy?

LEVINE: And it’s kind of funny that that would’ve been attempted—

REBIC: [superposed] Yup.

LEVINE: After you were sent back.

REBIC: [superposed] Yup.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: So I don't know whether that was the attempt that did it or whether some subsequent just driving over the borders thing did. I just know now—of course, later—that it was done illegally. But I don't know whether that particular time – I remember being in this truck—like, a moving type truck—big, huge truck, and I remember sitting in the actual back of the truck and – it's not a real comfortable ride, sitting in the back of a truck.

LEVINE: It was a closed-in truck?

REBIC: Yeah, closed-in truck.

LEVINE: And were you – were you – was your mother and brother—

REBIC: [superposed] Yup.

LEVINE: And you in the back of that truck?

REBIC: [superposed] Yup.

LEVINE: And—

REBIC: McLean was not there, obviously. He had made the arrangement, and I think he was going in his car across the border, but I don't know what the meeting spot was supposed to be. The presumption was that we would go across the border, get out of this truck, and then go into his car to go where.

LEVINE: Did anybody tr – check the back of the truck?

REBIC: No.

LEVINE: In the bord—

REBIC: No. But again, you have to wonder, when you go through situations like that, about the pay-off situation. Was this guy a regular person that did this kind of thing and therefore the bucks were there?—through McLean, obviously. The thing—

LEVINE: And the border guards, too, because they had to—

REBIC: [superposed] Absolutely. I mean, wouldn't you naturally want to check on – especially – you can walk across one of those trucks and you h – it sounds empty. They weren't moving furniture, obviously, and we were the only people in the truck, I remember that. It wasn't like a whole bunch—

LEVINE: [superposed] A bunch of people (laughs). Right.

REBIC: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: Like a whole mass immigration, but, by the same token, I remember the – the watches mostly because (both laugh) to this day, I think to myself, "It's so bling-ed." And also, McLean knew that.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: Clearly he's the one that made the arrangements, and clearly he knew about the watches—that this guy was a all-bunch crook. Did he know about the whole Ellis Island? Did he know that it was really not the way he said it was going to be? I don't know.

LEVINE: Yeah. So – but how long did you stay – did your mother stay married to him, then? Was – was she married to him—

REBIC: [superposed] To – to—

LEVINE: Till you grew up?

REBIC: I was a couple days out of graduation from high school. And I was older – believe it or not, after stripping all those grades and everything I ended up being nineteen years old when I graduated from high school, so naturally I was asked what grade I had failed, which, in fact, I did not fail any. In fact, I skipped the second and never finished the fourth. Eventually I finished, but I didn't actually finish the fourth. I actually was a bright little kid, fortunately, because, you think if I had been dumb it would've been awful, I mean, I would – I probably would still be in high school (both laugh).

LEVINE: Well, you had been in a lot of different schools.

REBIC: Oh, no kidding.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

REBIC: The only reason I ended up – I ended up – I – I was skipping the second grade because the teacher didn't – said, "There's no way she belongs in the sec—" once I get through the first grade. But then the fourth grade thing is (laughs)—and you wonder about the irresponsibility of parenthood—the

reason I never finished the fourth grade is that I started it a couple times and they just never quite stayed in the city long enough for me to finish it. And I went to another city to start the fourth grade, and fortunately the – whoever was in charge, I think the principal, was talking to me, and he said, “You don’t – she’s a bright little girl. There’s no way she belongs still in the fourth grade.” So he said, “Let’s try her in the fifth grade.” Well, not only did I have no trouble in the fifth grade, I ended up grading papers for the teacher. So, this shame to me was that I’d lost that time, ended up having this, you know, problem. But anyway, getting back to when McLean was gone—he deserted us. That – and I don’t understand why he adopted us. He legally adopted us three years after they were married—not something I wanted ‘cause I didn’t want to be separated from – even though I was obviously separated from my father, I didn’t want to have the, you know, the final name thing, and mean we never called him “Father” or “Dad,” we always called him “Daddy Mac,” just as a concession thing. But I never believed that he was my father. He was a nice guy by the way, he was never – he never did nasty things to us, or—

LEVINE: [superposed] Mhm.

REBIC: That was never the issue. And they did have a son together—well, technically two sons, together except I’m not sure about the – the paternity of the fourth child, but I know that he was Ron’s dad. Ron committed suicide when he was nineteen.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: Which was devastating to me. Doug, the youngest of the kids, is just a mess, period. But, anyhow, he – I was two days after graduation from high school, and he just disappeared. I mean, took every last dime out of the bank, everything—all the [not understood], everything. Took his car, obviously, and

the thing is I had no idea where he was, but I always got the feeling that my mother did.

LEVINE: Oh.

REBIC: And I – I don't know why she bothered to – she ended up being mar – continuing to be married to him till she met w – the guy that turned out to be her third husband, and then got divorced, but – and even that, you wonder, how can you divorce somebody if you can't find them? You do have to find a certain – 'cause seven years hadn't elapsed, or that – whatever that thing is. So the whole issue – number one, I don't know exactly why he decided to leave, except that she w – could be very abusive. Very abusive. And it's possible that that's what finally did it. The interesting thing about the school—you know, he was not only not Catholic, but was definitely anti-Catholic, and yet he's the one that made sure I went to this particular school.

LEVINE: Hm. Well, maybe it was a good school?

REBIC: It was a very good school.

LEVINE: [superposed] Yeah.

REBIC: But the big thing is, I had gone – when we moved to Pittsburgh—under circumstances that'll always be suspicious to me, but that's beside the point—anyway, I had gone – we were living in a hotel downtown 'cause we had just arrived in town, and the only school available was across what is now the north shore—although we call it west side—there was a high school over there that I had to enroll in, it was the only one around. And I came back, the first day I enrolled, and I was describing my experience, and I said, "They laughed at me when I said sir and ma'am." Now, I'd lived all these

years in the South, you don't say just whatever, you have to say sir or ma'am after you—

LEVINE: Right.

REBIC: Finish. And I said, "They laughed at me." And McLean said, "They laughed at you?" "Yeah." So the next day I go to get up to go to school, and it's ten o'clock and I'm just panic stricken, my God, it's, you know, whatever, why didn't you wake me up? And my mother said, "You aren't going to that school, your father is r—" she always called him my father even though I didn't consider him my father—"Has arranged for you to go to another school." So, I was in this school for two year – my last two years of high school, I was in Our Lady of Mercy Academy, and t – t – two days, about two days after graduation he disappeared.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: They had a – I met a [not understood] – you know they both were basically alcoholics, which didn't help, his (laughs) – my mother always said he learned to cook in prison, which may or not be (both laugh).

LEVINE: Wow.

REBIC: But, the big thing about it, of course, is the amounts he cooked—he was a very good cook, by the way. But you would – if you came into our house, you could literally choose what you wanted to eat. He would cook—every Sunday—he would cook. I mean, we never had a day that goes by that we didn't have at least turkey or chicken—whole roast thing—beef roast, pork roast—this whole mass of – of food.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: And my mother—who actually was a good cook, when I remember, as a little kid—she never cooked. Well, of course, why should she?

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: But she always teased him about what – oh, she teased him, I think it was a nastier thing than that. And it might be that she was imply – maybe – maybe he was a former prisoner, I don't know (LEVINE laughs). I'll never know, I don't know anything about – I didn't know when his birthday was.

LEVINE: Right.

REBIC: So.

LEVINE: Wait, I'm going to pause here because we've done an hour—

REBIC: OK.

LEVINE: And put this on because I wan – I want to also ask you something else.

REBIC: OK.

LEVINE: How did you happen to come to Pittsburgh, do you know?

REBIC: I have no idea. I do not know – the big thing is – this sounds like I married a much y – a bunch of crooks. My – my place of residence—where I came from—was Baton Rouge, Louisiana. My father was building—oh, actually I went to two or three different schools, even in Baton Rouge—went to Baton Rouge and, at one point, he went to – to rebuild the large mental institution that was Louisiana's major – in Mandeville, Louisiana. So we transferred to

Mandeville to live, and we transferred at such a time that it was at the end of the school year but too late in the school year to transfer to Mandeville. So, fortunately, Louisiana's driving laws—I was fifteen when I had a driver's license—so I drove my brother Pete me and to – back to Baton Rouge to finish school. And then we stayed there. And then we started in Mandeville school, and all of the sudden there was a – I think it was – I honestly don't believe in it. Number one, McLean wasn't a thief, but somebody cooked up the thing that he had somehow stolen money from this whole thing with the Mandeville construction thing.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

REBIC: And I don't believe it, I think it was all a political thing, that – that somebody else did steal, but it wasn't McLean. Number one, he didn't handle the money—he was – he was the—

LEVINE: [superposed] Right.

REBIC: Contracting chief. He was literally building it, so, I mean, he was in charge of sub-contractors and all that, but he just wasn't a thief. He had a lot of other problems going, but thievery wasn't one of them. But anyway, I think that was probably part in pars – of the reason that we left, 'cause we came back to Baton Rouge and we finished school that year at Baton Rouge. And—

LEVINE: Let me just ask you—you weren't saying Vanderbilt—what was the name of the—

REBIC: Mandeville.

LEVINE: Mandeville.

REBIC: Mandeville, Louisiana. And – but anyway, we came back to Baton Rouge, and I went back to school then, and then McLean just left the house we were living in then. Not desertion or anything, and I had no idea where he went, and I – I gathering that my mother did, but I think everybody was being secret about it, re – relative to this theft.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: I know at one point he spent the night in jail, but that was all.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: But he was never tried or any of that kind of stuff, which was all, really, you know, strange.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: Why he went to Pittsburgh, I don't know. But, shortly after that, so did we.

LEVINE: So you were, like, reunited with him in Pittsburgh.

REBIC: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

REBIC: But I also don't understand how, you know, the hotel that he – that he had us roomed in is gone now, but, by the same token, there had – there was obviously not a shortage of money, because they had a double room suite, my brother and I each had our own rooms—

LEVINE: And did you live in the hotel for a while?

REBIC: Oh, yeah, we lived in there for about—hm—six months, maybe.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And roughly what year would that have been?

REBIC: Let's see, I was seventeen, eighteen. Seventeen years old. So in the fifties someplace.

LEVINE: Mhm, yeah.

REBIC: Fifty – fifty-six, maybe. Something like that. Anyhow – and it was shortly after—about two or three years after—we'd been adopted, again, I never understood the adoption routine, although I've questioned it since to wonder whether or not since there was a settlement from the Canadian government when that happened—several thousand dollars, whether that wasn't the stimulating factor. And that sounds terrible to say that, but you have to wonder. You have to wonder, 'cause they knew that I didn't want to be adopted, not that that was – mattered, 'cause it wasn't my vote. But it just – it just wasn't of my choice, and I don't know why they g – otherwise, it l – face it, at that point we'd been living together, like, three years, why all of the sudden was it important?

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: But, I'll never find that out, obviously.

LEVINE: Yeah, right.

REBIC: It was actually always my dream, by the way, the rather significant separation of my mother and me—which, to tell you the truth, I do not understand. I was absolutely the best kid of the world. I was so scared of losing that. I never

did nasty things, I never did – I never did anything that was worrisome, I never d – I never slept with guy – nothing, nothing like that. I was kind of the perfect kid, ‘cause I was scared to be otherwise, probably.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: I mean, there was a big moral factor anyway, ‘cause the right and wrong thing is very important to me, but I think it was more the idea of what I’d lose if I did something wrong. So that can’t have been the reason that we ended up being enemies. I know that my brother’s suicide certainly didn’t help—

LEVINE: [superposed] Yeah.

REBIC: He was only nineteen at the time, and he was just the dearest – he was such a good kid. But the thing that I’m – I’m relatively confrontational and if I suspect something I need to know that I’m right or wrong—I just need to know. And at one point—oh, probably about a year after Ron had been born – or had died, I was on the phone with my mother, which was rare, but they were trying to get us to pay for Ron’s funeral, if you can imagine that. He was like – see, Charlie was probably a millionaire, and I was certainly not, and they were living in a beautiful house in Mount Lebanon—I was not. But they—

LEVINE: [superposed] Charlie was your mother’s third—

REBIC: [superposed] Third husband, yes. Real, total bastard. But, anyway, at one point I said to Mother – I said, “Mother, you have to understand that I always knew you didn’t love me.” And there was a so-called pregnant pause in which she said, “How did you stand it?” [pause] It confirmed, for me, that I was right—

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: But so painfully. And I never understood it. But I always used to – I always used to think, up till that point, that we'd have a chance to talk and figure out what was going on and sort this mess out. Well, obviously that never happened. My mother died in the Carolinas in a very nice area in the Carolinas, and – the most beautiful funeral I've ever been to in my life, with, I guess 'cause it's just the standard of things down – that Southern Pines, where all the golf thing is, I mean, it's a major golf type thing. And the big thing is it is a small town and the body is taken from the funeral home to where they were going to be buried, obviously, but on each intersection is a cop with flashing lights and everything as the car passes by. It's part of the ceremony. With the people who live there.

LEVINE: Oh.

REBIC: So, I think – number one, I think – naturally I see the cop, I think, “Oh, my God, what did we do?” (both laugh) Almost back to Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: And – find out that that's just part of their send off to the citizens.

LEVINE: Wow.

REBIC: It's like, boy, this is really neat. It's really neat. Although I was not made a huge part – my brother Pete, who also is a pilot, flew me down there because I didn't know how else I was going to get there. My husband and I were going through a financially stressful period, and I didn't – had no clue about how I was going to be able to afford – I was working, but I was the only one that was working at that point—after he had a very successful career, suddenly he

didn't have a job, and no chances of getting one 'cause of his age. And so I didn't – I didn't feel comfortable, number one, just buying a plane ticket and given the – the odd relationship we had, I almost didn't justify it. So Pete called me and he said, "Do you want to go there?" And he s – I said, "Yeah." So he bought me the ticket to take me down to Raleigh and then from Raleigh he picked me up in his plane and we went down to Southern Pines, I think is the name of it. 'Cause he just wanted to make sure I was there. And I think this all goes back to my brother being told—when my dad left for the final time – turned out to be the final time—"You take care of your mother and your – and your sister."

LEVINE: Ah.

REBIC: Which is a very European thing to do.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: Much more European, I think, than it is American. American men realize that that little kid is not going to be able to take care of – and it's a very European thing to do, I think.

LEVINE: And he took it—

REBIC: [superposed] Yeah.

LEVINE: Took it to heart.

REBIC: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: I think he's taken it literally. I mean, there's – obviously there are many times where he doesn't come to the fore in terms of this work because he's not – he has a lot of emotional edges that were never finished off. There was no way to do that.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: You know, his father was dead and his step-father was—

LEVINE: [superposed] Yeah.

REBIC: Iffy. And he tries the best he can, up to a point. But he's probably the world's worst father, he really screwed up his marriage, although she's now divorced from him, but I always knew that I would divorce my brother before I divorced my sister-in-law. I love my sister-in-law—my former sister-in-law. And I've got a new one that I haven't met yet, but—

LEVINE: Well, now, you married young, right? You married around eighteen?

REBIC: [superposed] I was twenty – I was twenty.

LEVINE: Oh, twenty.

REBIC: I was twenty.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

REBIC: And – and I was a mother the first time at twenty-one, but not for the second time until I was thirty.

LEVINE: Oh.

REBIC: I only have two children.

LEVINE: [superposed] Two children.

REBIC: That many years apart.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

REBIC: Two daughters.

LEVINE: Great. Well, do you want to say your daughters' names?

REBIC: Sure. Well, the older daughter is Michelle, always called Mikey, and she lives in Las Vegas. She had two beautiful grandchildren—here there are.

LEVINE: Aw.

REBIC: She's married to an engineer who's involved in a lot of the construction that's going on in Las Vegas, although they're—at this point—contemplating a move [slamming noise] to California. She also is an RN—as I am—and works in oncology as I did, although hers is a general oncology as opposed to my specialty, which was head and neck. Generally a happy person. My younger daughter, Dana, also an RN—

LEVINE: Woah.

REBIC: Works in – lives in Michigan with her husband, has just had a brand new baby girl.

LEVINE: Oh (laughs).

REBIC: In January.

LEVINE: [superposed] OK.

REBIC: She works at the Michigan Medical Center in cardiology. Her husband works for the Ford Motor company where he was recruited from the Pitt MBA program, which he finished here.

LEVINE: So you've stayed in Pittsburgh really, pretty much, ever since.

REBIC: [superposed] I – I – I actually love Pittsburgh. I – I think it probably—for whatever reason—was the city that I finally could come home to. Having lived to – in so many different places and hating to move. I – obviously you don't move that many times as a kid without realizing that you don't bother making friends because you're not going to have them next year. It's not that I – I wasn't easily befriended—'cause I was, people actually liked me, and I liked them—it's just that I always was very reserved.

LEVINE: What was it about Pittsburgh that – that you really liked?

REBIC: [superposed] I don't – I don't know. And I still – I have – I'm a huge Pittsburgh booster. I absolutely love the ci – I know it's got problems, it's had a – but there's just something, and it – and it hit me when I first moved, and I don't know why.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

REBIC: I don't know why. And I've lived in a couple of majors areas of the – of the boroughs—like I lived in Squirrel Hill for twenty years—the only place that I would consider moving to was Forest Hills, which is where I live now. I've

lived here not quite twenty-three years, and, again, as far as boroughs go, I love this borough. But it's, like, an old-fashioned fifties borough.

LEVINE: Oh, nice.

REBIC: It's just an odd borough. It's, like, different from all the other boroughs that I know of, but—

LEVINE: And your husband?

REBIC: My husband is—

LEVINE: [superposed] Name?

REBIC: He's actually – his original play – he was born in Braddock which is from around here. He—

LEVINE: So you married in Pittsburgh.

REBIC: Yes.

LEVINE: A Pittsburgh person.

REBIC: Yup – yup.

LEVINE: Great.

REBIC: My husband's situation was – my husband is the youngest of his family, all of his – all of his s – all of his siblings but one sister are dead now. He's the baby. He was five years old when his mother died and seven years old when his father died.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: And his one sister—the one that survives—is the one that—God bless her—
decided to give up her life—

LEVINE: [superposed] Raise him.

REBIC: Really, and raise him.

LEVINE: Wow. And what's your f – husband's name?

REBIC: Thomas.

LEVINE: Thomas Re—

REBIC: [superposed] Thomas Anthony Rebic. Yes.

LEVINE: OK. Well, what has given you a lot of satisfaction, when you think back on
your life?

REBIC: I probably—other than being a mother, 'cause I'm – love a being a mother—
but I think the nursing career I had. I had a – a very rewarding one in the
sense that I've had so many patients tell me how important I was to them.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: Some of them still communicate with me, believe it or not, and I've been out
of service for years—involuntarily retired, is what I call – I'm retired
involuntary due to significant multiple sclerosis and, obviously, can't do a lot
about that. But I think the big thing that – I like the fact that I have authored.

I've got a book chapter; I've been mentioned in a couple other books as being important sources, which may – I wrote a nursing journal column for years till I just got tired of doing it. But I like the fact that the most important thing that I did as a nurse was that I made a difference.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: Which, let's – faced in – in life, that's the best thing to think about. Just making a difference. And I think the idea that I must've made some difference 'cause I asked my daughters—'cause of course you come home bitching and moaning about a different day and everything that you've had, and I've worked in all kinds of units, including ICU and CCU and the OR, etcetera. But I asked them at one time, "Why did you choose to be a nurse? You must've heard me." And my older daughter, in particular, said, "All I can tell you, Mom, is yeah, of course you bitch, whatever. But all I can tell you now about that decision was that you seem to be satisfied and happy more times than you were the other way."

LEVINE: Hm. That's nice.

REBIC: [superposed] And I asked Dana why, I said, "Well, why you? With nine year difference in age I would think that you would've caught on that it isn't always an ideal place." And she said, "Mom, all I know is that you liked what you did. You didn't necessarily like the people you worked with—" which was true, especially my last job I worked in, the chairman of the al – oncology department office for the last seven years, and he was just a bastard. Just a real bastard. I mean, he had very successful world-known bastard, but he was a bastard regardless. And the one I worked directly for who's since gone was, technically, a mean guy, although he was just the most ingenious surgeon I – you could ever be around. And we still communicate by e-mail,

as far as that goes, but we – I had a lot of trouble with him because, as I found out later, he had no clue what nurses actually did.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: He was from New York—he had actually come from Czechoslovakia originally and done his training – most of his training here, ended up having his main practice in New York, and he was combination of otolaryngologist and board certified plastic surgeon. And everything he did was just—oh, my God. He just truly was a genius. I know the word genius is thrown around all over the place—

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: But he just – he did once confess to me, though, that he didn't understand exactly what nurses did. And I said, "Well, that was very evident." (LEVINE laughs) And he said – he said he wanted me to know, which was interesting, 'cause he had ac – he had actually at times been so, basically, cruel. You want to turn that off, you can. That he actually made me cry in front of people.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: He would make these awful remarks.

LEVINE: Wow.

REBIC: And – and I – I – I accosted him with the information. I said, I – you know, I'm really – 'cause at one point I said to the – the boss that was a bastard, "I don't want to work for this guy anymore." It's that simple. And – which would've been embarrassing, obviously, for the practice, the whole – to this whole arch

group of well-known doctors, but – in fact, one of the doctors that I worked for was Nancy Snyderman’s brother, who’s just a doll. He’s just a sweetheart.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

REBIC: And so is she—a sweetheart, by the way. But, the big thing here though, is the – the idea that he said – at one point he said, “I just want you to know that I was the luckiest person in the world to be able to have you work for me.”

LEVINE: Ah.

REBIC: And I said to him, “And when did you come to that conclusion?” (both laugh) Course he started to laugh at that point, but I think his wife talked him into it. His wife is just the dearest person in the world—oh, my God, I just love her. Which is unusual, to talk about – for – for some strange reason—not all, obviously—but a lot a doctors’ wives live their lives to the doctor. They even say the doctor when they talk about them, instead of my husband or Jim or whatever.

LEVINE: [superposed] Yeah, right.

REBIC: And – but Cheryl Janecka is she’s just – she’s just terrific, and I always have to laugh any time I ever say anything – people look, like, what is she going to say next? (LEVINE laughs) But it’s true of her—it was true of virtually all the wives of the – the doctors that worked in that group, I liked all of them.

LEVINE: [superposed] All the wives. Well it’s – about Pittsburgh, a little bit. Has it changed a lot since you’ve been here?

REBIC: Um—

LEVINE: And in what ways?

REBIC: Yeah, I think it has, but I think – I think it's changed positively. And I say that because when I first came here—and, again, it might've been my perception, my juvenile perception of it, I don't know—but at that time it seemed much less sophisticated than it is now.

LEVINE: Ah.

REBIC: I think the process was in motion then to make it a little bit more European, even. Or even like New York. There is nothing here that's indicates what – when it happened.

LEVINE: Mhm. Mhm.

REBIC: You know, they talk about the so-called Renaissance years which were, like, in the sixties, and to a certain extent you see that in – in the – what was done in terms of theatre and music and that sort of thing. [tapping noise] I mean, we're talking about an orchestra that was asked by the Pope to present – I mean that's the kind of thing, theatre thing. Every – in other words, everything here in Pittsburgh, in many respects, is the equivalent of New York. Even though you think, there's no way, Jose – well, it's – that's actually true.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: And, when I first moved here, it was kind of a large small town. It was much bigger—population wise, when I first moved here—which kind of breaks my heart that – that people are leaving. And I don't understand why they're leaving, but it's – it's a job thing—there are no jobs. That's why they're leaving. And—

LEVINE: Well, the mills were operating when you first came.

REBIC: [superposed] Well, they were, but they're not any more.

LEVINE: Right.

REBIC: And so many other things are gone – a good indication of that moving thing was my s – my son-in-laws moving after he got his MBA. Why did he have to move out of Pittsburgh? And he didn't move voluntarily, 'cause he wouldn't – it means that he'd be here if they didn't have to move. But when you're recruited by Ford and you don't have another job, duh.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

REBIC: That's – as – as for me, of course, the – there are not a whole lot of cities in the United States that are better equipped for medicine. It's a major medical center and has been for years.

LEVINE: Hm.

REBIC: So I didn't have to go anywhere to – to meet that demand.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: My husband's job was, when – well, when he ended up being fired because he was too old all of the sudden. Only – only the second top producer in the country that's – he worked for Sony Corporation.

LEVINE: Oh.

REBIC: And he was a major producer for them and all of the sudden [clicking sound] he was gone.

LEVINE: Wow. Well, do you think – are you glad you immigrated?

REBIC: W – w – I'm glad my—

LEVINE: Are you glad you immigrated?

REBIC: Sometimes yes, sometimes no.

LEVINE: Why on each side?

REBIC: [superposed] Well, the – the big thing about it is—and I think a lot of it has to do with the politics of now. I know this – I've been here for years, but I think that you watch what's happening now – the Bush administration is just—to me—an absolute disaster. And he is, obviously, and Cheney is, and whatever. But the big thing is, you think to yourself, well eventually it'll – and then you get a thing like today's report about the Supreme Court just going, of course, any way he wants. And you think to yourself, "They're going to just keep chipping away."

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: And that's – that's pretty scary. Because a – a – apparently we have no recourse, even though, theoretically we do. They keep calling this a democracy but, in fact, it's not, it's a republic. And, in fact, if it had been a democracy that whole thing with Florida would never have happened, they would've had another election.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: The b – and thing with Ohio in the last election. That wouldn't have happened either 'cause you would've had another election. So don't even give me that crap about making sure the Middle East is a democracy—we aren't. So that kind of bothers me. On the – the other thing being, of course, you think to yourself, "Well, things have been changed in the past. Maybe they'll happen again." It just seems now like a huge cancer, and nobody even knows how deep it is. So therefore, how do you begin the approach of healing when you don't even know how deep to dig? You know, I realize it's a cancer metaphor—I understand that—but, by the same token, it is a cancer metaphor to me.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: As far as its relationship to Canada, there have been several things wrong, obviously, in Canada in – in – in that sense whatever connection I have with n – I'm n – my – all my relatives are basically Canadians and still are there.

LEVINE: Oh.

REBIC: But that's not necessarily the draw. Because the other draw, of course, would be any one's that I have in Scotland, and people I've never met.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: People I'd like to meet, obviously, but the big thing is there are lots of things about the Canadian philosophy, including the healthcare thing and the medicine thing—all that stuff—that you think to yourself, "It can be done, why isn't it being done here?" You know.

LEVINE: Yeah.

REBIC: My sister-in-law who, of course, is Canadian—the one I love, the one who was married to my brother—has just moved back to Canada, or is – will be moving back in Canada for the very simple reason that she needs the healthcare. That's – that sucks.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: That really sucks. I mean, why is she having to move back to Canada, for God's sake, when she had a life here, her job was transferred to some other country, so she lost her job—she's a very able person, she's French-Canadian and actually speaks [not understood]. But the fact that she's forced because of health care issues?

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: Duh? I mean, we have this huge, massive ability. And I think I became more conscious of it because I worked in it.

LEVINE: Mhm. Yeah.

REBIC: [superposed] Yeah. You know, you just – you just – you just know these things can happen. And – in 1992, because I was the clinical coordinator for this center for cranial bi – surgery here, after – that's how I retired, too. We had an international meeting in Mexico—the doctor I worked for was the chief of the skull-based group, the international skull-based group, and he decided he wanted me to go with him, he also decided I was supposed to write a book chapter in his book, which I did. And it was very good, I might add, I was very pleased with it, even though I didn't want to write the damn thing, because he wanted me to have a – but, anyway, what surprised me was any time any of the doctors would stand up starting whatever presentation they were giving,

they always precluded it with, “I don’t know if this is how they do it in Pittsburgh.” Can you imagine that?

LEVINE: Wow.

REBIC: That’s how big skull-based surgery was from Pittsburgh, all over the world. And I, on the other hand, in this – in this meeting would be stopped by people who wanted to know exactly what it was that I did in relation to this center. And they weren’t all nurses, lot of them were doctors who were establishing their centers or whatever and they wanted to know, “What exactly do you do for Dr. Janecka?” that did – that’s why I described. Which, and then when I talked to Janecka about this, he said, “That’s why I wanted you to write the chapter.” “Well, they may not read it.” “Yes, they will.” ‘Cause he was the editor of this particular book. But it tells you, though, what’s possible.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: When you see that much possible, in just medicine. And you even talk about – even – let’s go with the sports teams routine—the Steelers. There are fans all over this country who’ve never seen the Steelers, they just are Steelers fans. Even though there are football teams in their cities. Why? I don’t know. The baseball team—let’s not even start with that one—and also the hockey team – I’m a hockey – big hockey fan, I’m not a – I’m not a football or baseball fan but I’m a major hockey fan. But I especially love the Penguins. But it’s just odd little things like that that are important parcel of an internationally recognized center along with this other, folksy stuff.

LEVINE: Mhm.

REBIC: Which is also now being shared with people all over the place.

EI-1459 REBIC

LEVINE: Wow. Well, I think maybe that's a good place to end.

REBIC: OK.

LEVINE: On a high note about Pittsburgh.

END OF INTERVIEW