

EI-01A

CHARLES J. CRIMI

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INTERVIEWER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.

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SICILY, 1911

AGE 3

SHIP: SANTA ANNA

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RESIDENCES:

- **ITALY: SAN FRATELLO, PROVINCE OF MESSINA**
- **US: NY, NY**

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: MR. CRIMI WAS THE FIRST INTERVIEW IN THE ELLIS ISLAND INTERVIEW SERIES. HE IS THE HUSBAND OF ELENA DANISA CRIMI, EI-1B. THE MODEL MR. CRIMI REFERS TO IN THE INTERVIEW IS A LARGE MODEL OF ELLIS ISLAND HE CONSTRUCTED IN HIS BASEMENT USING HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS.

SIGRIST: This is Paul Sigrist. I'm here with Brian Feeney. We are at the home of Mr. Charles Crimi. It is June 21st, Thursday afternoon, at approximately 2:25, and we're going to start interviewing Mr. Crimi about his immigration experience. The first thing I want to ask you is to state your full name and to tell us when and where you were born.

CRIMI: Now, let's go back in history, and push the cobwebs aside. I was born in the town of San Fratello, Province of Messina, and when we came to America was because my mother was despondent by losing a beautiful son of twenty-one years old at the time that he died with an explosion when they were building a beautiful house in San Fratello. Now, through the years, after two years my mother came to America with my sister and they were working on the plumes, the feathers for the hats.

SIGRIST: And what year was that?

CRIMI: This was in 19 . . . (he pauses) 1909. They came here, and I was left alone as a young child, and my father missed my mother and she had to come back to Italy. All right? Finally the conditions were so bad that my sister, my older sister Bessie, she made a dress for a person in the town, a woman, and she gave her two cents. So you could see the conditions, what have happened in the past. After Garibaldi and all the wars that went on, the country was devastated.

SIGRIST: Could you state how many people were living in your household, please?

CRIMI: In my household at the time? At the time . . .

SIGRIST: And by name. Please list your brothers by name, please.

CRIMI: I had my brother. I'll start with my brother Anthony, my brother Salvatore. Anthony was a beautician. Salvatore became a decorative painter. Then I had my brother Fred. He became a violinist at a music school. My brother Alfred became an artist, and he's very well known. And I admire him for it, because some of him rubbed off on me. Regardless of what feelings you have in family life, between brothers, but when they understand how much they need each other. Well, finally, then I had, I mentioned my sister Bessie. My sister Josephine became a nun here in

America, and she is buried in St. Patrick's Villa. She became a nun in 1922. And we actually brought our culture with us to develop the Catholic part of religion, which was wonderful, and what we have done.

SIGRIST: What did your father do for a living?

CRIMI: Now, my father was a builder in Italy, a stone mason. He used to build these beautiful buildings, beautiful ovens, the round ovens. And you could smell the aroma of the bread coming out through the hillsides. That's what my father did. And not only that, he was the chief mason for La Madonna, no, that was the name of the church is La Matricci, the mother church in the town. Now, this has been devastated already with a landslide this spring. So my, let's go back to my father. He was left an orphan. He had to take care of his brother. That was in the '80s. Now, then through the years the government gave pieces of land to these people that had nothing. So my father got a beautiful piece of land of a cork forest. This cork forest was made into a beautiful orchard, with olive trees, which we brought some of the olives here in America. With almonds, and all sorts of things that grow on the hillsides of San Fratello.

SIGRIST: Was this the area that you grew up in as a child?

CRIMI: As a child I was, well, before I came to America, I was about . . .

SIGRIST: You were young.

CRIMI: Quite young. When my brother got killed with the explosion I was nine months old. And I was a pawn to the family. Which I don't regret, and I bless my mother for coming to this lovely country, because she had foresight.

SIGRIST: So your mother preceded your father, or did she go back . . .

CRIMI: No, no. My mother had to go back again because I was left as a little baby about two years old, and my sisters took care of me, you see. But I was undernourished, and all that. So my father understood the situation. But she had wanted to make money in order to get the whole family over there, all of us, see.

SIGRIST: So she came over here and worked in the feather industry.

CRIMI: In the feather industry. And . . .

SIGRIST: Did she do that sort of work . . .

CRIMI: No. She was a designer. She used to work the looms. She used to make beautiful, beautiful handmade quilts. Or with the, what do you call it, crocheting and everything. As a matter of fact, she was one of the leaders here in Pelham Bay that developed Our Lady of Assumption, that developed St. Theresa's Church and many other parts of the community. Now . . .

SIGRIST: Before we get too far ahead, what, why America?

CRIMI: Why America? She was despondent. She didn't want to stay there any more.

SIGRIST: Did the family know someone who had been in America? Is there a story?

CRIMI: Oh, yes. Now, my uncle and aunt, two uncles and two aunts lived 107th Street. Well, when we came to Ellis Island they picked us up and my aunt Antoinette held me in her arms and took me over, I think I told you that on the phone, to Mr. Levine, that lean-to. Mr. Levine, thank God for the Jewish people. She bought an ice cream cone. That was the first ice

cream cone that I've tasted in my life.

SIGRIST: Now, when did your uncle and aunt immigrate?

CRIMI: Here? My uncle and aunt? Oh, they must have, maybe about five years before, you see.

SIGRIST: I see. And what did your uncle do for a living?

CRIMI: Now, they had to work on these buildings, construction. Also my father, when he came he worked on some of this construction which was very, very hard. And they contribute a lot to America in their own way. But all these buildings that you see, old structures that are still existing that they tear them down and burn them down and all that sort of thing, they worked on those buildings, you see.

SIGRIST: So your uncle was in the construction building business also?

CRIMI: That's right.

SIGRIST: All right. Let's go back to the homeland for a minute. Do you, so your mother came back.

CRIMI: Yes.

SIGRIST: And she and your father, leaving your sister in America? Or did Bessie come back with your mother?

CRIMI: No. Bessie came back with my mother.

SIGRIST: They both came back.

CRIMI: Yes. But coming back to Italy. All right. Now, as I mentioned to you, when that woman gave her two cents for the dress, she threw it in her face, and she said to my mother, "Let's go to America." And that started the wheel going. The poverty and all. That was very hard. But we . . .

SIGRIST: Do you remember your parents talking about how, the poverty . . .

CRIMI: How things were, you know. There were certain situations where we hardly had anything. But we managed, though. We were workers. In the whole town they all loved us. And when my brother was killed with the explosion, all the artisans came and finished the home for my father. That's how much he was loved. And he hated to come to America, because he already had been established at fifty years of age, and I was three-and-a-half years old.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what port you left from, or do you remember your parents talking about it?

CRIMI: Now, this is beautiful. Taking La Ferrovilla, meaning the iron rail, Ferrovilla, the train, going to Palermo. The first time I was in a train as a child, I visualized and what do I see? The trees walking. Did you ever get that impression? Einstein's theory, you know what I mean, relativity? That's when I learned it.

SIGRIST: That was your first time in a train.

CRIMI: In a train.

SIGRIST: And you remember this?

CRIMI: Oh, I can't forget it. And then, when we were aboard ship I'd see the dolphins up and down.

SIGRIST: So did you leave from Palermo?

CRIMI: Palermo, right.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the name of the ship?

CRIMI: Oh, the ship's name was Santa Ana.

SIGRIST: Santa Ana.

CRIMI: Right. And the John E. Moore, that I have in my model. The side-paddle wheeler picked us up and brought us to Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: We haven't gotten to Ellis yet. (He laughs) So you're on the Santa Ana and it's your mother and father . . .

CRIMI: All, the whole family.

SIGRIST: Nine of you, right?

CRIMI: Yes.

SIGRIST: Okay. And you were in third class.

CRIMI: God knows what class it was, because steerage there was no class at all.

SIGRIST: Right. Do you have any memories of that at all?

CRIMI: Memories? I have a memory. The only thing I really liked, when I'd hear that little dinner bell, "Ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling. Pastina per bambini." In other words, little pastina, soup, for the children. And I'll never forget that,

you see. And I'll never forget when my mother would say, "Wait, come over here, let me comb your hair. Otherwise you see the big vents? Those big vents in there? The fish will take you." (He laughs) Well, anyhow, so . . .

SIGRIST: Do you remember anything that your parents, or maybe your brothers and sisters talked about the trip over?

CRIMI: About the trip? Oh, pleasant.

SIGRIST: Did they enjoy it, was it pleasant, was it not?

CRIMI: My brother Anthony came, and he lived. He became a barber, and they lived in a barbershop. He was fifteen years old.

SIGRIST: I mean, we're talking about on the boat right now.

CRIMI: Oh, on the boat, yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any of your family talking about that experience, being on the boat, maybe, I don't know. I'm just wondering if your family is any . . .

CRIMI: Oh, any experience relative. Well, I just know that they spoke about the stench that was in steerage, and you've seen those pictures. I have so many downstairs with my model that the, it was unbearable. And then when we came . . .

SIGRIST: When did you arrive?

CRIMI: We arrived in June 1911.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

CRIMI: 1911. Now, and I mentioned to you about Einstein's theory, and there I am again, on the Second Avenue EI structure that used to be there. That's before your time. And I see all the houses walking. They were the clothes.

SIGRIST: As a child that must be a wonderful thing to see.

CRIMI: That was wonderful, but that's the impression it gave me, and that's what it really is, relativity. You see, and through the years. Now, you still want to talk about Ellis Island?

SIGRIST: Oh, absolutely. We're still on the boat. (He laughs)

CRIMI: On the boat.

SIGRIST: We're still on the boat. So you arrived in New York Harbor in June of 1911.

CRIMI: Right.

SIGRIST: Do you have any recollections of, you said you boarded the John E. Moore.

CRIMI: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: And that took you . . .

CRIMI: I remember when the water was so rough in the bay, you know. It was so rough in the bay, and I still see that right away, you know.

SIGRIST: You remember seeing the Statue of Liberty at all?

CRIMI: Uh, the Statue of Liberty. I was too small to understand the meaning of it, you see. The aesthetic value of it, which is beautiful.

SIGRIST: Yes, it is.

CRIMI: And that's why I'm trying to enhance Ellis Island with these ideals of my model. And I hope you will take them for that museum, because this is our heritage for my family. For all of us, my wife. Everyone that has come to America here, for trials and tribulations. And they have made a place for themselves, here in America. Very well known.

SIGRIST: Let's talk about, say, your parents and the processing procedures at Ellis. Do you remember anything about being in the building at all? Were you held over night, perhaps, or for a couple of days?

CRIMI: No, no. Never held over night. We were all healthy children.

SIGRIST: Do you remember at all being looked at?

CRIMI: Looked at? Well, you know, here you are, in Ellis Island, in that big hall, all right. The hall where they take all the cattle, put them in one room, another row, and another row, and all I remember was a lot of confusion, you see, as a child. And things didn't register so well because of all that confusion that went on. See, because I was three-and-a-half years old, and what could I make of it. Well, I made a lot of it, because by . . . We're still on Ellis Island, right?

SIGRIST: Yeah, we're still on Ellis Island.

CRIMI: Ellis Island. Now . . .

SIGRIST: Do you remember, did your parents bring food with them on the boat, or were you fed at Ellis once you got to Ellis? Do you remember anything like that?

CRIMI: But was that food, about ding-a-ling, the bell, when the brought the food?

SIGRIST: Well, you were talking about the dinner bell on the boat. And I was wondering . . .

CRIMI: But they would bring the food around, see. On the Santa Ana, that's an old steerage ship.

SIGRIST: But you didn't eat at Ellis, that you remember.

CRIMI: No, no, no, no.

SIGRIST: You went in and out.

CRIMI: We went in and out. We were a healthy family.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any, or, again, remember your family talking about any, you know, like the uniformed people, the inspectors and the matrons. Do you remember having any dealings with any of them?

CRIMI: No, we never had any dealings with them. Only they just stamp it, and there you are. Well, I tell you, my name is Crino Crimi. C-R-I-N-O, Cyrano Crimo. Now, my brothers, Alpheus, Philadephius, Eccerinos. Now, there were three martyrs in the town of San Fratello. And these martyrs were killed on the Valerian, way back, because of the Roman culture, the, what do you call it, Catholic culture and all. Well, anyhow, they had a beautiful chapel. I have the painting upstairs. You will see the

town itself that I have made. See, we went through so many things up there that it's kind of a time taking, see. Now, so that's Alfred, Fred and Charles. J, put the J, Crimi, which they put a name on the road. And I also have upstairs the nameplate of the road, like you see out there, it's upstairs, see. Now, we're still . . .

SIGRIST: So who came and got you at Ellis? Your aunts and uncles?

CRIMI: My aunt and uncle that came to, no, we had arrived down at the Battery. I forget the name of that place there. We arrived in there and they brought us over. All right? And then they took us on the Second Avenue El to their home.

SIGRIST: And did you all live with them for a while?

CRIMI: Well, we stayed there a while, and then we got an apartment in the same building. And . . .

SIGRIST: How many rooms?

CRIMI: How many rooms? I think there must have been about five rooms.

SIGRIST: This is a lot of people, you know, kids and . . .

CRIMI: Yeah! Oh, shoot, we were small. (He laughs) I was the youngest. Well, anyhow . . .

SIGRIST: And what was the address of that building?

CRIMI: (he pauses) 165 East 107th Street. That was right between Second and Third Avenue.

SIGRIST: Did you have running water in that apartment?

CRIMI: Oh, yes. We had running water, and then we had to share the toilets together with the neighbor next door, you see. And then we became very friendly with these people. They were clean, immaculate. My uncle and aunt was very, very clean. Around the little sink, the old-fashioned sink she used to have a little drape, like a little curtain right around it, and she'd change it quite often, you see? And my uncle was a hard worker. We had so much love in my family, through my aunts and uncles. But I don't forget it. I used to go down to visit them every holiday, because we had moved. Well, now can I . . .

SIGRIST: Well, how long did you stay in that one apartment?

CRIMI: In that one apartment? We stayed maybe about a year. Now, the next move was 108th Street and First Avenue.

SIGRIST: The family moved . . .

CRIMI: We all moved together, completely.

SIGRIST: Or were your older brothers and sisters out of the house?

CRIMI: No, no. Completely. At that time families were very knit, very knit family. Now, First Avenue, there was the Marionette, a little theater. We had the marionettes, the puppets, you see. So my brother Salvatore learned how to make the scenes in the back. That's how he became a decorator, you see. And the puppets and all that sort of thing, that was Italian heritage, that . . .

SIGRIST: It was a large Italian neighborhood.

CRIMI: Oh, yeah. Sure. And we, while we decided, because the markets were too much. So we moved down on 93rd Street and First Avenue, over there, and we went to a, I went to a school there, it was a parochial school, and there was a public school. And we stayed there, oh, maybe about four years. I was about four years, four-and-a-half years old.

SIGRIST: Talk a little bit about what your parents are doing at this point. Is your father finding work?

CRIMI: My father was finding work, and my father didn't like the way they worked here because he was a maestro, he was a master of his trade. He says, "No, I don't like the country."

SIGRIST: He didn't want to come here to begin with.

CRIMI: He didn't want to come here to begin with. (He laughs) I tell you, this is really something. And my mother, she was the key to the whole thing. And God bless her for doing this. Now, let's see, where are we?

SIGRIST: We were talking about your father working. Was your mother working, too?

CRIMI: Oh, my father working, and here they are. My mother used to knit and sew and everything. Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: Did she do that to help bring in . . .

CRIMI: To help, sure. Then my sisters, my sister Josephine became a dress designer, and she was making out pretty good. Then my sister Bessie was a dressmaker. Then later on my sister, let's see, my sister Josephine, Bessie, Mary became a dressmaker. And my sister Rose was born here, you see, because she had been conceived, the DNA branching out,

branching out to America. You like this?

SIGRIST: That's cute. (They laugh)

CRIMI: The DNA branching out to America. Well, now . . .

SIGRIST: We've got five minutes for you, so let's talk a little bit about, all right. So you were going to school in that neighborhood as a child.

CRIMI: Well, I went to a school in that neighborhood. And then . . .

SIGRIST: Was it primarily, were most of the kids Italian, or was it a mix . . .

CRIMI: No, mix. All the Irish, they hated the Italians. (He laughs) There they are, there's one boom boom, my brother Anthony's hat, he had a derby. He was fifteen years old, they thought he was well-dressed. He looked like Charlie Chaplin. I got the picture upstairs. And so they says, "There's one." Boom, they put the derby over his head. Then one time we went up, my mother says to my brother Alfred, "Take Charlie with you." In other words, Charles. They go up 110th Street and get some fruit and all. So coming back, we had bananas and stuff, and what happens there? A couple of Irish kids, they ran after us and they stole the bananas while we were sitting on a logger, you know, where they had the logs for the clotheslines in the back, you see? And that was what we went through in the beginning.

SIGRIST: Talk a little bit about your family learning English.

CRIMI: English.

SIGRIST: Didn't, I imagine that your parents probably didn't speak any English, or did they?

CRIMI: Well, they understood a lot of English, but as far as speaking the English, you know, starting at fifty years of age or more it was kind of difficult in order for them to absorb the grammatical terms in English.

SIGRIST: Sure. As children it was much easier probably.

CRIMI: Oh, sure, sure.

SIGRIST: Now, you were probably spoken, you probably, what did you speak in the house?

CRIMI: Oh, wait. We spoke a dialect, which was a Norman dialect. When the Crusades conquered all Europe, the Crusades conquered Sicily in the ten, eleventh century. From the north, Amelia, Tuscany, they all came down as the Crusades, and they conquered the Moors. And we speak a Norman dialect, which is almost like a French, see. But then I've learned to speak the real Italian.

SIGRIST: Did your parents ever learn to speak English well?

CRIMI: Well, they were too old in order. Because we kept them at home, and all the children worked to take care of them. We were a knit family, and we didn't want the parents to go out looking, because we were many. And thank God that we were many, see? And my brother Salvatore was a painter; he'd paint the houses. And then next week he'd worry because he can't pay the rent and so forth. Then one day he comes in with a piano, a big old piano that looked like a pool table.

SIGRIST: Sure, a square grand.

CRIMI: And we learned music. I learned how to play the piano. My brother Fred

became a violinist. With twenty-five cents a lesson, we used to go to 125th Street to a little school, a music school. Then my brother Al went to the National Academy of Design, just like I went to the National Academy of Design.

SIGRIST: And you graduated here?

CRIMI: Yeah. Oh, that's a long time ago, about 1927, yeah. And my brother Al, he stuck mostly to painting. But I've studied sculpture, painting, architecture, engineering, designs, and through the years, now this is very, very important that you have to know how I came up to this, what do you call, Charles Crimi Road, and all.

SIGRIST: Well, remember we're primarily interested in the early years.

CRIMI: The early years.

SIGRIST: And we've been talking about . . .

CRIMI: But these are, well.

SIGRIST: We have just about fifty seconds. Hold on a second, we'll flip the tape over.

END OF SIDE ONE BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

SIGRIST: This is the continuation of the interview with Charles Crimi.

CRIMI: Charles J. Crimi.

SIGRIST: Charles J. Crimi. This is Paul Sigrist, and Brian Feeney is in attendance. Mr. Crimi, you graduated from the National Academy of Design in 1927.

CRIMI: Yes, '27. And I learned to love, in the National Academy, the paintings, the clarity of paintings, the sculptures, the Greek sculptures and all the works that were done in the past by our famous artists. And I've learned architecture, sculpture and painting. And we had, oh, excuse me.

SIGRIST: What was your first job after you graduated?

CRIMI: Now, the question was this. After I graduated, my first job was I became a decorator, all right? I did designs, ceilings in the Carnegie Home where they had beautiful paintings. And I used to do all the gilding, all the ornamentation around it, see. As I went along with a certain company that you get involved with, and as you grow older and older. And, now . . .

SIGRIST: So did you do mostly decorative work through the 1930s?

CRIMI: All decorative work, right.

SIGRIST: Of course, you were doing WPA murals.

CRIMI: Now, let's get to the WPA murals. Now, at the time the Depression came I worked on the WPA making murals in the public buildings, The Morissania Hospital. Beautiful murals in the first World's Fair, showing all the judiciary with all housing and all the stylized paintings which you have seen upstairs, which are very important to me.

SIGRIST: Was the depression, you were married to Mrs. Crimi at that time. You married her in, when?

CRIMI: In 19, let's see, 1931, during that time.

SIGRIST: So did the depression have a profound effect on your standard of living,

say . . .

CRIMI: Let me explain that in 1939 the war started. All right, I had these murals in the first World's Fair, 1939, big murals and all. Then the war started, and that was the end of WPA, you see, because everything has changed. Avarice, greed, Hitler. All these things that came about which were very bad for our country. But, now let's continue. From there I had to take a job in a defense plant, otherwise I would be taken in the army with two children.

SIGRIST: During the World War.

CRIMI: They didn't want to give me a job as a designer. I did some engineering work and all that, as a designer, because I was Italian. I was born in Italy. Just like the, we have the Japanese out west there and all that. And all these things came about during the war. So I had to take a job out in Kearney Shipyards as a shipwright. Instead of a shipwright you know what they had me doing? Putting up bats for insulation, the glass, fiberglass, going into my lungs. I quit a week, as soon as I was there a week I quit the job. Then Schrader Valve Company in Brooklyn, Vanderbilt Avenue. I have the paintings upstairs that I made, drawings and things. Now, this is what has happened in Schrader Valve. I got a job there; first of all, this Mr. Brown wouldn't give me the job. I was Italian. Then I kept after him until he finally gave me a job, and I had my hands in oil. In oil, there was sulfur in it. I'll never forget them, the 7607s were the valve for the coreside planes, which at the time, over at Palesti Airfields they would shoot them down, the ones that were up high. So we had to make these valves for the smaller planes to see this. So that's what I did. Finally they saw that I was a good worker and I started running the multiple screw machines. And from the multiple screw machines Mr. Meisner, one of the salesmen as a teacher, he says, "Come in here, boys. We're going to have a class and we're going to show you the

designs. A picture plan and so forth, and so on." He showed me the picture plane. He didn't know how to get the projections in the picture plane. So I says, "No, here you have. Your picture plane, if you got a chair here you're going to have these angles coinciding and meeting." You know all about it, right? Do you know about it?

SIGRIST: No, I don't.

CRIMI: More or less. That's perspective.

SIGRIST: Yes. Yes, sure. Okay.

CRIMI: In a perspective. So this is what happened. He says, "Mr. Crimi, what the hell are you doing here? You better go up to the engineering department and see Mr. Larsen." First they didn't want to give me a job, but when they found out my background, what I was capable of doing, Mr. Larsen says, you know that picture you saw upstairs with the stage and all that? I brought that down there and I showed it to them. And he says, "I bet you you're going to go ahead and design our air conditioning in our plant." I says, "Mr. Larsen, I can't do anything at the time. I want you to put me under your arm and teach me all there is about tool designing." I stayed there four years, and I became a crack tool designer. And I went to school at night, to Mechanics Institute, to learn all about this. And that's very important.

SIGRIST: So what, we're till about what, 1950 now?

CRIMI: Uh, 1943, 1945, around that time. And then coming to, uh, let's see. Let's go ahead.

SIGRIST: We've got about, what, three minutes now.

CRIMI: Three minutes?

SIGRIST: Three minutes.

CRIMI: That's bad.

SIGRIST: The three greatest things that happened between 1945 and now.

CRIMI: All right. I worked with the Army of Engineers; I worked as an electrical engineering designer, as a mechanical designer. Then I worked with the transit, because the pay wasn't much, and I stayed four years over there, all about signal circuit. And I went to school learning about signal circuit design on Eighth Avenue, downstairs. Two years, and I got a certificate, as I went along. Then later on, from there, from the Transit, I went to, I didn't like it. It wasn't kind of dangerous. So I went with the Board of Education. I stayed ten years, and I became a, what do you call it, architectural, an engineering designer, with the Board of Education. And now I'm retired from the Board since 19, uh, '74. And I've been lecturing all my children since 1974, and today I came from the graduation, they picked me up, at the age of eighty-three, and brought me to the school. You're going in style. I was on the stage, and you should see, in seventeen years that I've been teaching these kids all visual programs. And when I came it was a party. Now, the principal introduced me, "Mr. Crimi, this is Mr. Crimi here." I says, "Oh!" I went like this. (He gestures) "Beautiful. I spent seventeen years with all of you. Now I see you leaving me and going away. Good luck to you. Did you enjoy the work that we had together, the fun?" Says, "Yes. Raise your hands." All of them. This is this morning. This morning, before you came. And there they were, all in the, what do you call it, in the auditorium. The girls on one side, the boys on the other side. And you should see the love I get from the parents. That's what I have done here in America, and that's why they named the Crimi Road after me. And that's why I'm helping the Pelham

Bay Hospital over here with their engineering, because they didn't know the situation out back. And I, doctors came into my sick room and they brought in a, what do you call, engineers, three engineers. And I was teaching them what had to be done for drainage, sewer drainage. And now I had this beautiful thing this morning, and I want to thank you ever so much, Paul and Mr. Feeney.

SIGRIST: Oh, it's our pleasure. Aren't you glad your mother wanted to go to America?

CRIMI: Oh, not only that. I'll tell you, we made a mark in America. My mother with the religions, the three churches. My brothers as an artist, my brother as a violinist, a teacher, and all that. Well, anyhow, we were a knit family. Without a knit family you got nothing, but with love. Paul, without love you never get a thing. But if you're after money, you go down to Wall Street. But I was never after money. All I have is enough to bury me, that's all.

SIGRIST: So give us a final statement, then.

CRIMI: A final statement? Tell me, did you like what I had to convey?

SIGRIST: Fascinating.

CRIMI: Fascinating.

SIGRIST: You've had a very interesting, very full life.

CRIMI: Yes. A final statement. Now, being that I'm not able to go to Community Board Number 10, I've been an activist here in the community, all right. Now, the head of the Community Board, he and members of the whole board sent me a letter. "Dear Mr. Crimi, I want you to know that we all love what you have done in the past, and that you are sick now, but when

you are well you come and you become a member of our Board and any meeting any time you'll be a lifetime member." So Jimmy just took me home now, the head of the Community Board. So, you see, final statements, what is it? Now, all I have to say is thank God I have a pacemaker, and I had pneumonia for about a month. And thank God, with the antibiotics, that between my pacemaker that I had for three years and the antibiotics I fought it, and I've been very weak through it, but that's the reason why I would like to give this model to the Ellis Island Museum with all my love for the work that they're doing by understanding trials and tribulations of all the ethnic groups in America. Let's hope that America will be beautiful forever. I want to thank you ever so much, Paul.

SIGRIST: Thank you, Mr. Crimi. This is Paul Sigrist signing off, with Brian Feeney in attendance.

END OF INTERVIEW