

TITLE OF VIDEO: Friedrich Pfleiderer

DATE OF VIDEO: May 24, 2018

TRANSLATED BY: Marina Cox

DATE OF TRANSLATION: June, 2019

<p>[00:03] Friedrich Pfleiderer (Belisario)</p>	<p>My name is Friedrich Pfleiderer. Originally my name is Belisario. I am a native of Armero, Tolima. I was displaced from the Tolima department and from there I went to Manizales. I was offered a job in a textile factory called "Única" and my job was to load salt</p>
<p>[00:33]</p>	<p>in a truck all day and unload it in the factory. The salt was used to preserve the colors in the finishing section. After working there in that department, they transferred me to the loom section. In the loom section my job was to sweep. But I would go watch the mechanics, and there was a man who would say to me, "Watch them, young man, so that later on you don't say they didn't teach you."</p>
<p>[01:03]</p>	<p>And I said: "Do not worry sir I'm watching. I see what they are doing."</p>
<p>[1:08] Sofia Kearns</p>	<p>And how old were you?</p>
<p>[1:10] Friedrich Pfleiderer</p>	<p>I was sixteen years old. That man, whose name is Pedro Cano, even came to see visit me in the U.S. He passed away, but I remember Don Pedro would always tell me, "Look, kid. Pay close attention because I do not have time to repeat it. Pay attention." He said it just to make conversation, but I took it to heart.</p>
<p>[01:33]</p>	<p>He thought he was chatting with me, but I was paying attention to what he was doing. That's where it started, from there I watched people knitting, how they did it, how they stopped the machine, how they threaded. After being there, I went to Bogotá and got a job as a weaver. In Bogotá I worked in a company called "Textiles Monserrate." I worked there for a while and I learned more about the profession.</p>
<p>[2:03]</p>	<p>There they needed weavers and I already had a good idea, so I knew more or less the basics of the job. So, I was a weaver there for a while and then I went to another company. That other company was called Textiles Monterrey. This company was also in Bogotá. I arrived at Textiles Monterrey, and there I met a man from Medellín. The man's</p>

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[2:33]	<p>last name was Pérez. He was a gentleman [inaudible], I noticed that he was very knowledgeable in the textile industry, in looms in Colombia.</p> <p>Then that man gave me a job there in Textiles Monterrey and the looms were ancient. He was in charge, he had a small little factory that had about forty, fifty machines, that was what he had, maybe less. Then the factory was in a bad situation and Mr. Pérez returned to Medellín. Then I said "no, this is over, I'm going back." So, then I went back to Manizales.</p>
[3:03]	<p>And being in Manizales (uh) [pause] they came to look for [inaudible] weavers from the coast. A company on the coast called Tejidos Celta came to Manizales to look for weavers. So, I signed up. [pause] And, but it turns out that when I signed up, the man who had come to recruit workers had already picked out the people he needed and said,</p>
[3:33]	<p>"No, I picked up the ones I needed, but if you want to go there, there's work there." And I "ah, well." So, what I did was I went there, I was working for another company, a tool factory. [pause] So, there we made nail files, or machetes, or knives, various things.</p>
[4:03]	<p>But eight people worked at the company. It was a company they had brought from Belgium. Then I said, "I'm leaving here." So, they paid me off. By the time I got paid off, I had worked there for about six months. And so, I got paid around twenty-five Colombian pesos. With these twenty-five pesos I bought a bus ticket to Medellín. And there I asked how much it was worth, "From Medellín to Barranquilla. Medellín to Barranquilla is worth twelve pesos. "</p>
[4:33]	<p>I, "well, I'll try and catch it." So, I bought one from Manizales to Medellín. I went to Medellín. And in Medellín, that same day I went on a different one to Barranquilla. I arrived in Barranquilla at about ten or eleven at night. And a guy there told me: "Do you need a hotel? And I: "Yes, but very cheap because I do not have money." He said "How</p>

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[5:03]	<p>cheap?" And I said, "one that is very cheap and affordable." Then he took me there to a rundown hotel, the guy from the hotel charged me two pesos for the night. In the morning I woke up early because I saw the sun and I thought "oh no, it's late what happened" But it turns out that on the coast, the sun rises very early. Then I went to outside and asked what time it was, and they told me "it's six in the morning." And I said: "Six in the morning and with that sun?" [Laughter] He said "yes, it's six o'clock." So, I ask a guy there, "Hey, where can I take a bus to go to this factory, it's called Tejidos Celta?"</p>
[5:33]	<p>And he says: "ah, no, see, that's route forty. Those buses that are passing through there, go that way. Ask anyone if they know where the factory is and they'll drop you off in front." I arrived at the bus stop and the bus was coming. Filled with people. There were people crammed together in the back. I went back there too. I ask the guy next to me, "Hey, do you know where Tejidos Celta is?" He said, "Yes, I'm going over there. I work there. We'll walk and get there."</p>
[6:03]	<p>It was not that far, it was what, like ten minutes by bus, something like that. I arrived at the door and asked for the man who had been in Manizales. "Remember me from before?" And he said, "Yes. I have a job opening. You have to have the judicial pass, receipt of the military passbook and medical card." Then I said, "well I have one thing. The receipt of the military notebook</p>
[6:33]	<p>And I have ... to get the other ones." [inaudible]. The judicial pass at that time was worth two pesos. And the medical card [pause] was worth a peso or less. They told me where to get it. All you have to give them is an address and they would say, "No, you put Tejidos Celta and that's it." And so, I did. In the end, that's where I started working as a weaver. That was more or less, in 1960. That was where I started working</p>
[7:03]	<p>and I worked from sixty to sixty-five. And there I worked as [pause] My last job was as a mechanic. But initially it was as a weaver or sewing operator. From there, diagonally across from the company was a factory that was called Remaches Industriales. Remaches Industriales was a company that had been brought from here (the US)</p>

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[7:33]	because it was a company that produced nothing, but then an Italian brought it there (to Barranquilla). And he said "I will get two to three smart Colombians and put them work," and that's how it happened. So, he had a factory next to Tejidos Celta. He was the son of Italians and had arrived in Colombia from the United States. He had arrived in the U.S. as a child. He was a big soccer fan, so he had a soccer field behind the factory.
[8:03]	So, everyone who wanted to play soccer met there. The man would watch them and would pick them out for his team, and the rest of us were people who would watch. We were there, making noise, and there was beer and some kind of food there, I would say no, no, I don't want it, but he would give it to us anyways. Then he asked someone
[8:33]	What is that, what is that over there across from us Diagonally across, because Tejidos Celta was very big. Then he said "No, that's a textile factory." He said, "Yes, I want to get me a very good mechanic. One or two good mechanics, because I have some old looms in the United States and I need a couple of good mechanics and two good weavers."
[9:03]	So, the requirement at that time to leave Colombia was a document certifying that you knew how to do that profession. At that time, I was not very interested, but I kept it in mind. Some of my friends, who among those was a man from the coast called Gustavo Carreño. In other words, the first ones who arrived here in the United States
[9:33]	as textile workers, were from the coast. Barranquilleros that worked in Tejidos Celta. That was originally how it started. That's where Gustavo Carreño, a weaver, was and already a mechanic's assistant. And he was a weaver in the same place where I worked. And the other was the mechanic, he was the same man who had told me when I was a child to be careful, he was there. Don Pedro, everyone knew him
[10:03]	as a good mechanic. So, Don Pedro asked for the job, and that gentleman said "this guy will be useful." Then he brought Pedro Cano

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<p>[10:33]</p>	<p>and my friend, Gustavo Carreño. [pause] And the other one who came to be a mechanic, who was not a mechanic but a supervisor, at this moment I do not remember his name.</p>
<p>[10:40] Sofia Kearns</p>	<p>Those were the ones who arrived: Gustavo Carreño and Pedro Cano.</p>
<p>[10:41] Friedrich Pfleiderer Belisario</p>	<p>And Pedro Cano.</p>
<p>[11:03]</p>	<p>And the other one who came was another weaver from another shift of the same section called Alberto Díaz. Alberto Díaz, also Barranquillero. Then this Italian gentleman name is or was, James Gutteri.</p>
<p>[11:33]</p>	<p>He brought them there. And there began the story of importing textile workers to the United States. Why? Because in the north of the United States, a lot of synthetic fiber was woven. There, cotton was not used, instead synthetic fiber was used. Those synthetic fibers were used for umbrellas, ties, and those fabrics were also used to make waterproof jackets, things like that.</p>
<p>[12:03]</p>	<p>But, if you compare what a factory is like today, the ones I worked at were small. They were small in size because the factories themselves were small. I even worked in one that had twelve looms. And out of the twelve there were only eight that worked. The other four were broken due to lack of spare parts or lack of someone to fix them. I told them "I am able to fix them." So, they gave me work there. And there I started to work, but the man from</p> <p>Rhode Island created a kind of chain, which today we will call a staffing practically. So then, Gustavo began to bring people from Barranquilla, all the workers, the first ones who came to this country, were generally coastal. Because they were all the Tejidos Celta workers, and the one that was not Tejidos Celta, was from the factory across, called Marisol. And those who were not from Marisol, was from another factory where</p>

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[12:33]	They made hammocks, which was called Abuchaibe. And there was another factory above it called, I think, Sedatex. It was there, next to route forty. There were several factories in Barranquilla and from there they came [pause] began to come, and this Gustavo Carreño was leaving and when Gustavo Carreño arrived in Barranquilla, that made the city shudder because he came to take people, right?
[13:03]	And the factories, even in Tejidos Celta, prohibited, it was forbidden to give documents to people who were working, as certifying that "they work here as their work is so and so." Because they knew that they were going to turn in the guy, and he was a worker that they were going to lose. And before they used to go to look for workers inside the country, that's where I came in, right? So, this Gustavo Carreño
[13:33]	started bringing people in. I do not know exactly in what form, or how he arranged it with the factories. There were several small factories in the state of Rhode Island. One of them I remember was called Pontiac and the other one was called Cadillac. The other one I do not remember what it was called. I do not remember what it was called, it was of Mr. James Gutteri's. But, between one of those there was one where the majority of the costeños, the people from the coast, worked.
[14:03]	The point is that once Gustavo was there, I told him "Man, I want to go there." He says: "Oh, bring me a certificate. That way I can fill out the requisites." And so, I got a recommendation from the factory that I was an active worker of the company, that I knew how to practice the profession of mechanics, and other things. Then he brought it, and about three months later, the call came from the embassy, that we were accepted to come to work in the United States.
[14:33]	So, I was not alone. It turns out that they put Colombian textile workers into groups. So, then you knew where everyone was. Where did that guy live or where did he used to live, what did he do? Then, when they informed me, I started to tell others, among them, that I remember well, I told a man named Elkin, Elkin Ortiz. But, Elkin Ortiz was not

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[15:03]	there, he was in Venezuela, and so there was a man with me who was a friend, or a relative of him. And I told him: "Hey, you who see him frequently, tell him to come. They approved his contract to work in the United States." And Elkin came a few days after. The issue was that they arrived there and we needed to get out of here as soon as possible. I do not know how the procedure and paperwork worked. The issue is that I had to go to the embassy with my name and you would say "they'll take me, the company hired me so and so" and you would show them and that's it.
[15:33]	They gave me the visa on December twenty-fourth at eleven o'clock in the morning. "We're going to dispatch you quickly because we have to go to home" and I "Well, let's go." At eleven o'clock in the morning they gave me the visa, and they said to me: "You can go now." We all had a visa, we were all ready, we already knew who was coming. Among those, I remember one whose last name was Simmons. There were two girls who worked at Marisol. One was called Patricia and the other one I do not remember her name.
[16:03]	Of the people who came, I remember one who has already passed away and whose name was Jaime Tabares. The other lives here and his name is Elkin Ortiz. The issue was that we arrived, fourteen, eh, around fourteen, we all arrived the same, the same day. The arrival here was a disaster. Because we all got on the plane and we arrived as Indians. I remember that they opened these doors, you arrived and stopped in front of the door,
[16:33]	more or less like a foot away, and the door opened. So, the one guy who was in front of me, was a Barranquillero boy, but he had the reputation of being very [pause], I do not know, countryside type, I do not know [pause]. They called him, they even nicknamed him, the rula, a countryside game. Anyways, he was ahead of me, and the door wouldn't open. In the back of the plane, a lady screamed
[17:00]	"Please open the door!" Then, the guy in front of me says, "Did you hear, cachaco?" And I said "what?" "The lady lost a broach" and I said "Oh really?", He says: " Yes and since we are Colombians, they are going to believe that we stole it from her. So, we got together to search. Then, as we were searching, one of the employees who

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[17:30]	<p>worked on the plane came. And he was Cuban. And he said, "Why don't you open the door?" "No, it's just that the lady over there said</p> <p>"This and this and this" and we are looking for it. And he goes up to the and asks her. And she says "I have not said anything; I haven't lost anything. I only said, "open the door" [laughs . NOTE: "Open the door" sounds like "el prendedor" or the broach in Spanish]] The guy comes and tells us that "So, for the door to open you all have to stop here" and that's how it went.</p> <p>Well, that was the first funny thing that happened to us. I came to work for a company, we all came to a company that was owned by an Italian gentleman called [pause], I think his name was Americo, but the last name was Pentabino or Peitabino .. Peitabino.</p>
[18:00]	<p>[sigh] and that man had two little factories called Pentabino Silk Mill, it was silk, but it was artificial silk. And there we came to work. I had to work third shift, and I only worked on one floor [pause] at night. I was alone [pause] everyone else was Americans or Portuguese. On the other floor, everyone else who had come were working there [pause] I think they brought us because the owner had that floor empty. And why did he not have people to work for him? because it was</p>
[18:30]	<p>the time of war [pause] so, all young Americans under the age of twenty were enlisted and they were taking them away, no matter what condition they were in, they would take them away. But because of that, there was no one who worked in the factories. [pause] That was where the idea of importing workers started, and then that changed the system, as to what I said before, as staffing: they hire you, they bring you there, if you weren't of good use, they fired you[sigh], if it went well, the company kept you.</p>
[19:00]	<p>In a similar way. The thing was that the guy who had active contacts in Colombia was given a percentage like [pause] I do not know, I think at that time it was like a hundred dollars for each person he brought. Furthermore, they would settle you in a house, and we would have to pay rent all together. And from the monthly check they would deduct the airfare, so you would end up earning around seventy-five,</p>
[19:30]	<p>seventy-eight dollars in your pocket per week. [pause] But it was a good time because the situation was economic. For example, where I lived in New Bedford, Massachusetts, I paid three dollars a week for</p>

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	<p>rent and so, when I went to bring my wife, they told me that I was going to get fifty cents more for being a family, so I had to move because it was already too much. [laughter] There began the importation of textile workers.</p>
[20:00]	<p>How did eh [pause] the idea of coming to South Carolina come up? Well, I was there, ... I had problems with my wife. I was living as an unwelcomed guest and in a room above a bar, so I went to an Italian friend and told him [pause] No, but before that [pause] before that [pause] I had gone to work [pause]</p>
[20:30]	<p>at a [pause] it was not a factory because there were two garages, and there were ten looms and out of them only ten [pause] were working with six, eh, o, o, or seven. The others weren't working for lack of mechanics and eh [pause] there was no one to fix them because they were very old machines eh [pause] looms [pause] Crompton [pause] ahh</p>
[21:00]	<p>very old, very old, I do not remember the model, but it was a mechanism that no, nobody understood. That's why they were not able fix them [sigh] ah [pause] When I worked there was when I had the, ah, there [pause] I fixed those machines for that man; and the man was very happy [pause], since he made more money.</p>
[21:30]	<p>Because I already had the machines working and such [inaudible] I had a special talent for that [pause] With the ten machines producing, he was making a special cloth for the Dupont [pause] he was the only one that was making that type of material, because those machines were used for that [pause] so</p>
[22:00]	<p>[pause] He kind of managed to get a loan with the bank and they gave him new machinery. A machine brought from Switzerland [sigh]. But, since I did not know how to speak English, and I was the only one who was working there, I then said, "I'm going to be without a job." I was asking there for signs about what was going to happen, and they say "no those machines they are going to throw them out [break] they will bring new machinery. So I said "and what am I going to do?" And he says "No,</p>
[22:30]	<p>you will have to go [pause] because [pause] the machinery that they are going to bring is modern. "I said" ah, well. "[sigh] [inaudible] Some days later, oh no, then the owner came and told me "see, every time you finish the material to the machine, do not worry about</p>

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	<p>replacing it because they are going to leave [pause] letting them run out of material and we will take them out to throw them away. " "How come?" Yes, then I started thinking, "how are they going to throw them out like that."</p>
[23:00]	<p>But at the same time, since I still had the idea of Colombia that when you are fired you have no idea when the next job will come up, right? [pause] I said "Oh, what am I going to do, man? How is it like that?" I was thinking. Then, a few days later the boxes arrived with the new machines [pause] as</p>
[23:30]	<p>the old ones were running out [sic] of the material and were stopped and were ready to be taken to be thrown out [pause]. So, I was staying longer because I was a mechanic, [pause], I was a weaver, [pause], and I was a knotter. I was doing three jobs [pause] because there were generally six, seven machines that they had been working, so the guy told me "I cannot afford a mechanic</p>
[24:00]	<p>For seven machines, not one weaver, so, for seven machines, I need a guy to do everything. "And I said" I'm capable, [pause] I've learned to do everything. [pause] And so it was. Oh! And I also had to do the yarn bobbins too. No, no, so I was, busy eight hours. [pause] In any case, the man made the money. [inaudible] They named the factory, it was called [pause]</p>
[24:30]	<p>Depson Mills [pause], Depson Mills in New Bedford, Massachusetts [sigh]. Then he made money and got a loan to bring the machinery [pause] and a few days later, I saw him coming with some huge boxes, some boxes huh, that, were eighteen feet long or more [pause]</p>
[25:00]	<p>So, since I had more time, I said "I'm going to open them to see what it is." Then I started to open them, until I left the machine there with just the base of it. So, I said [pause] "and when is the technician coming?" "The technician is very busy because that factory is selling all over the world, that's the latest in machinery." And I [pause] "so you have to learn this." [Pause].</p>
[25:30]	<p>And, the opposite, I'm going to be left unemployed [sigh] then I started putting the machines together piece by piece [pause] until</p>

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[26:00]	<p>whenever the technician came. It had been about four or five months. I had already put many pieces to the machines, and that guy, the boss, had bought eighteen of those machines, and then when the technician came</p> <p>I said [pause] "ah, here comes trouble because it's possible that I put together the pieces together wrong, it's the first time I've seen these machines in my life [laughter] right? [pause]. That's how it was. One day around ten in the morning. They rang the bell in the apartment downstairs and I lived on that second floor. [pause] "Hey, they want you to come to the factory, you need to go now." So, right there, I thought "ah, they're going to fire me" [pause]. Because</p>
[26:30]	<p>I had already heard that the technician was arriving at any time, this week, or the other, but they didn't give me a specific day [pause] I [sigh] "ah, surely the technician arrived." So, that's how it went. I went to the factory, and they took me there to the office and said (inaudible) "What we're going to say isn't bad at all. The gentleman is the technician of the house manufacturer of those machines. These machines are designed in Switzerland.</p>
[27:00]	<p>I said, "ah" [pause]. "The man [pause] wants to ask you something." [Pause] And I said, "ok, what is it?" "Who taught you how to put the machine parts together?" And I said: "Nobody." And the other question, "where or who taught you?"</p>
[27:30]	<p>"No one has taught me." "So, how did you put them together?" "I put them together by thinking hard. I was just trying to put the pieces together in a way that would be easier for the mechanic. "That was my intention, and so that I could keep my job." He says, "ah, [sighs] the technician said that the way this is put together is perfect, this is not bad, he just wanted to meet you.</p>
[28:00]	<p>And I said "oh." [Sigh] They told me, "As of today you will keep coming every day at eight o'clock in the morning [pause] to help the technician assemble the machines, and after that, at four o'clock in the afternoon, you will start your shift. "Me?," oh, ok. "And so it was like that. In any case, the technician says, "See, you already did everything, I do not have anything to</p>
[28:30]	<p>teach you here. "Then he reported to his company in Switzerland. He said, "There's a guy here who put everything together, and they do</p>

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<p>[29:00]</p>	<p>not need me here anymore. I'm leaving." So the company told him, "We need that guy's name [pause] and we're going to send you a package to give it to him, but make sure the company doesn't find out about it. "And that's what happened. The next day, the guy came and he says "Come with me." He call my name and handed me an envelope [pause] in the envelope, there was an open-end round-trip ticket to Switzerland, and he said: [pause] "because they need you there. This is the ticket and he put his hand in his pocket and took out a few coins, like ten-cent coins. And he told me:</p>
<p>[29:30]</p>	<p>"Use these little coins when you get to the airport, [pause] call me at this phone and I will answer." [Pause] I saw that as simple, right? [pause] Well, he then said: "But you can't tell anyone here, you can say whatever you want, but don't say anything about this in the factory. You say nothing and just leave." And it was like that. The day came, and he said, tomorrow, Thursday, is my last day.</p>
<p>[30:00]</p>	<p>So, the guy was only there Tuesday until Thursday because everything was already assembled. Then the guy left. On Friday I show up at the factory and I told them that I'm not going to work anymore. And they said "What?! If the technician left, why did you ...?" "No, I'm leaving." The guy had warned me not to say anything. I said, "No, I'm leaving." "But where?" "No, I'm leaving" [sigh]</p>
<p>[30:30]</p>	<p>"Why?" So, since I did not speak English, they brought me an interpreter [pause], and he said, "You have to tell us where you're going." I was really pressured to say something. So, what I did was I took out the envelope where the sign of the manufacturing company was. And I said, "Look." "Can we see?" And I, "No, I'm going to show you." I kept the envelope.</p>
<p>[31:00]</p>	<p>[pause] The factory workers were watching, and he said, "It's fine. [sigh] But we were going to pay you more, if it was a matter of salary. "And I said" No, it's not that, it's not salary, but I've realized that it's something better. "And that's what happened. So, the next day, I got on a plane, Saturday. [laughter] The tickets were there and everything else.</p>
<p>[31:30]</p>	<p>I took a plane, and I left. I think I had like fifty or seventy dollars in my pocket. And so, I left, and that's how I got to Switzerland and, then to Zurich, and I called the guy, and in a couple minutes he came and picked me up and took me to a hotel and said, "You are staying</p>

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<p>[32:00]</p>	<p>in this hotel." [pause] I said, "ok, great." Well, what he actually said, I imagined, because I did not understand anything the guy told me.</p> <p>I would imagine what he was telling me, do you understand? It was not that I knew German or, or, or their language, which they call Tedesco. No, it was not that, but I, in my imagination was thinking "This is what the guy is telling me." {Inaudible} a hotel, a small room, just a bed, a dressing table and nothing else, a sink and that was it. And he said, "They're coming for you."</p>
<p>[32:30]</p>	<p>Oh! At night they came. And it turned out that in that hotel where I was, there were twelve, there [pause] ah [pause] Out of the twelve there was an Argentinian, there was a Peruvian, [pause] there was an Italian, there was a Japanese, there were [cis] two Germans,</p>
<p>[33:00]</p>	<p>among those was a [pause] German whose first and last name I later adopted. He was a factory owner. Then, a Portuguese, there was a Portuguese and a Spaniard [pause] and, then they were already talking to us in our own language, the, the, the Peruvians, the Argentinian, the Spaniard and: "So, what is this? "And they said," No,</p>
<p>[33:30] FP:</p>	<p>they brought us here because they need us here, they are going to train us here because they need technicians to travel the world." [pause] I said, "Oh! Without thinking, this is what I dreamt of doing this. I never thought it would happen this way, but I'm glad it did!" That's how it was. [pause] The next morning, eh, eh, there were a number of problems that happened</p>
<p>[34:00] FP:</p>	<p>and you don't believe them until you see it. One of them is that you cannot sleep [pause] you can't sleep because your internal clock is out of whak. On Sunday, a man named Hans Hundig arrived. That man spoke nine languages. Hans Hundig arrived and said to all of us, "Well I want to congratulate you for bing here</p>
<p>[34:30] FP:</p>	<p>and tomorrow, in the morning we are going to start training. [pause] So, I want you to know that everyone has the opportunity to work with the company. Everyone. But the company only needs one."</p>

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[35:00] FP:	So, I said, "Why's that? [pause] there are how many of us here? About twelve or fourteen and you just need one!" He said, "the one remaining by elimination, there is going to be an assembly line. A line. If you do not arrive to the front of the line on time and do not do it correctly, you move to the back. But you do not have a second chance. [pause]"
[35:30] FP:	Well. That's how it went. [pause] The next day we went, we introduced ourselves, and the guy read us the rules and said, "See, everyone is going at a machine. We will teach each one of you, all at the same time, how it works, the movement of the machine. And everyone is going to be assigned a machine and is going to
[36:00] FP:	practice. What you are taught, you are going to do. When you are finished, ring this bell. Then, you will see how long it took you to do so. And someone will come and check. Well, to finish a long story, the end is that they were taking people out, they were leaving daily and if not daily, weekly. Weekly, you would go out, you would go out. Why? Because he had said in the beginning that it was a line. A line. If you
[36:30] FP:	did it bad today, you did not have the chance to correct it, but you moved back in the line. [pause] Everyone who was doing poorly was moving to the back. So, they would get points off because of that. When you failed three times, you were out. That was it, all you did and without being able to sleep,
[37:00] FP:	the food was not, uh, I wouldn't say it was bad, but it was not what we were used to. Eh, oh well, that was part of the story there. The point is that at the end [pause] I got the degree and that job, and from there I came back to the United States. And I arrived there, to New Bedford, where I put the machines together right?
[37:30] FP:	Upon arriving, the problem with my wife happened. Then I got a divorce, ta, ta, ta, or, several divorce attempts. Then I called my Italian friend, so that he would call me, ah, then I had a list of factories that had that type of machinery. So back in Massachusetts there were only two. The rest of the factories were here.
[38:00] FP:	One was Milliken here in Greenville, the other was Milliken in Union, and the other, I do not remember the name, but it was not Milliken, it was in a town called Star, further south of Anderson. When my Italian

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<p>[38:30] FP:</p>	<p>friend called and said that he needed a technician, he said, "Yes, we have machines not working because we don't have many technicians."</p> <p>Then they told me, "You are going to review them." [inaudible] They gave me a ticket to come here and a note about where I could stay, and that's how it was. I arrived here in Greenville, here in 1969. So, they gave me the address, and I came in a taxi. The taxi, those taxis that take people to hotels from the airport.</p>
<p>[39:00] FP:</p>	<p>They do not charge you anything. They brought me there to a hotel on Augusta Road that was called Howard Johnson. They came to pick me up in the morning on Monday. [pause] [inaudible] All that I am saying, I was putting my imagination to work. My English skills were not perfect and I had to guess what they were telling me. The guy told me, "We're going to pick you up and take you to the factory." "Well, I'm ready." Then, yes, he took me to the factory.</p>
<p>[39:30] FP:</p>	<p>The factory was new, look, all the looms, new Swiss made. Oh, what beauty! Then they asked me, "Do you like it?" and I said, "Yes. I like it." My intention was to get out of there. From Massachusetts. Because of the problem with my wife and [inaudible] and me leaving. So, they asked me, "When are you going to start working?" and I say, "Well, give me two weeks."</p>
<p>[40:00] FP:</p>	<p>I went to collect everything, and I went to the factory. He said to me, "Now." "I want work for my cousin." But he was not my cousin. It was only him who had given me a place to stay when I was kicked out of the house. I called him a cousin in order to protect him, right?</p>
<p>[40:30] FP:</p>	<p>And he asks me, "What is he? Is he a weaver?" and I say, "Yes." And he says to me, "Bring him." So, I went there, and I found him, and he said, "How did you do it?" and I, "Fine, and I got a job for you." He said to me, "Great! Well, are we leaving?" Right? The boy is from Manizales, he isn't from Manizales, but from Caldas, de Neira. But he had worked in the factory Única, he was a weaver. His name is Jairo Martínez.</p>
<p>[41:00] FP:</p>	<p>He visits Greenville from time to time and is retired. He is over eighty years old. I arrived there with him. I came first, I got the job, and afterwards I went to collect him, I came with him by car. I started working in the company and people were very satisfied with my work. The problem was, one day</p>

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[41:30] FP:	they had something that was sealed on the machine, which could not be opened except by a certified technician. So, I opened it and the machine was stopped because the machine components had not arrived yet. Then, they had to bring a technician from Switzerland to do that, and I do not know how much the technician was worth. A lot of money. So, since I was working there,
[42:00] FP:	they didn't need the technician, because I was there. "Do you know how to fix that?" "Yes, I know how it is." Then I started putting the pieces together and doing everything I had to do. Until it was five in the afternoon. When it was five o'clock in the afternoon, only three screws were needed to finish the setting. Then, I saw the manager of the company standing behind me. So, I said, "Oh, he's coming to pick me up." Because they
[42:30] FP:	provided me room and board, the company brought me here. I told the other mechanic how to put in the screws, because the screws had a certain way of going in. There has to be a first screw. If you put this first and squeeze it, this one will not go in all the way. Then I said, "Try to put it in." I told him how to put them. Then the manager said to me, "Why did you not do it?" "I saw you there and so I thought, well that you were waiting for me." He said to me, "No, no, no.
[43:00] FP:	finish." [pause] It was five o'clock, so I told him I thought it would be overtime. He told me, "No." "I'm not going to come here from Colombia to work for free, then." I thought, right? He told me, "No." And I told him, "No. I don't think so." Then he took me to the office. He told me, "Look
[43:30] FP:	you signed this. You are going to become a factory employee of a private payroll. Whether you work twenty hours a day or work two, or don't work, and we will pay you. But that's what you signed. But you already said no. Do you want to leave?" and I said, "Yes. I'm leaving." I had already worked there for four days.
[44:00] FP:	Or five days. Then the factory told me, or they told me, then, "We're going to give you the ticket to return, we're going to pay you compensation." And I said, "No, no, no, do not give me anything, the only thing I want is for you to say that I worked here and that I did a good job." He told me, "Of course." So, I left. I came from that town to Greenville,

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[44:30] FP:	they were putting together machines here at White Horse. There was a factory that was called JP Stevens. They were bringing the machinery. So, I got there, but not necessarily to work as a mechanic. I needed to work where they gave me overtime. Then, I saw that the overtime there
[45:00] FP:	was weaving. So, I went there, and they said, "See, there are all those machines without use. They need an operator. We do not need mechanics. We need an operator." And I said, "I'm ready!" And I started to work. After that, the change of shifts came, and I said, "Do I come tomorrow?" and he said to me, "Yes." The next day I went. "Do I come again?" [inaudible]
[45:30] FP:	Come bak. And so. Until I had worked a week there. Then, I came with Jairo. With Jairo Martinez. Then they said to me, "Hey. Bring your social security so we can make a check for you. You've been working here for a week [smile]. Oh well, then I gave them my social security. And then they sent Jairo Martinez and me
[46:00] FP:	to a medical examiner. The company's doctor was out there on Augusta Road. We passed the medical exam. During that time, the weaver ideally had to be tall. Jairo Martinez was short. So, Jairo was not considered a good candidate because he was short. So,
[46:30] FP:	they told him: "You can't reach the machine." He said: "But I know how to do the job." And yes, he proved that he could. And they discarded the idea that you had to be tall. The issue there was that we were working, working daily, the hours that we wanted. After that shift, we worked the hours we wanted. So, one day the manager came, not the manager, but the boss, and said,
[47:00] FP:	"Uh, where can I get some workers? If we have six or seven workers like you, we do not need more. [pause] Where do we get workers like you?" "Now, that is easy, go to Colombia [smile] and bring them." He says, "Is that possible?" and I said, "Yes." "And how?"
[47:30] FP:	"Go there to Colombia, to Medellín. Go to Medellín. That's where the textile center of Colombia is. Go to Medellin and put an ad in the newspaper, three or four hundred will come, and so on." He said, "Well." They got an ad, and they asked me if I wanted to go and I told them no. Why? Because I thought if I went with them,

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[48:00] FP:	Who would pay me? Right? But I never thought that they could pay me for the time that I was there. So, I did not accept to go with them, but I told them what they had to do: go to Medellin, put an ad out and you can choose according to the experience, the type of work, and where they work. Ask for a certificate
[48:30] FP:	to prove that they know how to do the job, and that's it. And you offer them a work contract and bring them here. And you bring them to the embassy in Colombia, and that's it. So, it was like that. There were fourteen that came here first. The first. Among those was Elkin Berrío. Elkin Berrio was there.
[49:00] FP:	The others have died. The news of jobs in the US spread all over Colombia. Then it came to all of the people in Rhode Island. Those that were in the Colombian colony. Then they began to come. I remember that one of the first people who arrived was a man, uh, whose last name was Pineda.
[49:30] FP:	He came with a son, that son is still out here somewhere. His name is Rodrigo, but I don't remember his father's name but, Ramón, Ramón Pineda. Then Ramón Pineda and the son came and after, after Ramón Pineda, before that had come another who was from Manizales, whose name is Hernando Aristizábal, who has also died.
[50:00]	So, he came too. And another came from Pereira, whose name was Gustavo. Then they, as they were already there, there in Rhode Island, they knew all the labor union that was there. Then they started calling people from over in Rhode Island and they started coming.
[50:20]	They began to come from there, from Rhode Island. Huge numbers. And [pause] almost everyone settled there in a factory on 385, it was called Furman. That's what the factory was called. It was from a company called Dan River. Originally that was the name of the firm. Here in Greenville a lot arrived at a company called Woodside, but from the same Dan River firm.
[51:00]	I believe, I'm not sure. I think Woodside was part of the Dan River, company. And afterwards, others came and were placed in another that is lower down called [pause] Eiffitt. But it was from JP Stevens. Then, they worked there a lot, between between JP Stevens, White Horse, Dan River, and Furman. They worked there, oh there were already about fifty I think.

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<p>[51.45] SK</p>	<p>Colombians from both Colombia and Rhode Island?</p>
<p>[51.48] FP</p>	<p>From Colombia no one else came, uh,. Directly from Colombia the first ones that were about fourteen came. That's when Elkin Berrío arrived.</p>
<p>[51.59] SK</p>	<p>¿Elkin came straight from Colombia?</p>
<p>[52.03] FP</p>	<p>Yes, Elkin came directly from Colombia. That was called a recruitment, a recruitment. The others came because of the rumors spreading that So-and-so lives in South Carolina, then came the rumors there in Rhode Island, then began to come from over Rhode Island. They started coming from another part that was called, from Massachusetts, a town that was called, ah, Lowell</p>
<p>[52.33]</p>	<p>Lowell, Massachusetts. There were other Colombians working there who had been recruited directly from Colombia as well. In Lowell there was a Colombian gentleman named Jaime Cadavid. So, he went and brought them from Colombia, just as Gustavo Carreño did. Then he would bring them to the Massachusetts side, and Gustavo Carreño would bring them on the Rhode Island side.</p>
<p>[53.03]</p>	<p>But I came from Colombia as, as a textile worker. The Italian gentleman brought me to New Bedford. But since there was nothing to do and since we were going thirty minutes from New Bedford to Providence, we all got together. In Rhode Island, in the state of Rhode Island, there were no more than fourteen Colombians. There were no more than fourteen.</p>
<p>[53.33]</p>	<p>Then we would get together there on the weekends to tell stories, to have a drink, and to talk, to talk about the things that happened to us. The things that happened make people laugh today, but, happened in restaurants, for example, for example, "I cannot stand chicken because that was the only thing I ate." [laughter] Once the others tell me, because we arrived as a group, right? They tell me, "You are smarter, go and order chicken, and we all will pay for it." Then I went and ordered a barrel. Right?</p>

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[54.08]	Then they came and told me, the girl asked "do you want it hot?" And then I said, "Hey, she asks if we want it hot." Sure, well with it being cold outside, why are we going to want cold chicken. "Yes, hot, hot, very hot." Hey, it turns out that hot meant spicy and we were eating that thing and we had tears [laugh]. Well, and so on, a lot of things happened to us, a lot of things.
[54.38] SK	Compared to the work in Colombia with everything you found here, how, how does it compare? Share a little bit about your daily life with us. Like, for example, you told me that in the north you and your friends had fun going to this other city . And here in Greenville, what was life like on arrival?
[54.59] FP	When we arrived here in South Carolina, initially it was Jairo Martínez and I. We did not have anything to do, so we got a trailer there, walking distance from work. There was a trailer park past the railroad tracks, so we lived there. [pause] And when another guy came from up there, from Rhode Island, who was this young man from Manizales. We did not have anything to do, so we used to play cards.
[55.33]	We had nothing to do, so we used to play cards there too and there was a policeman who owned the park. The police came by and saw us and we were playing cards and drinking whiskey. Greenville has grown but to the north, around this area very little. In some areas it has grown a lot. But Greenville has always been a nice town.
[56.05] SK	In several of the stories I have heard, the workers from Colombia brought their families, others formed a family here. Do you want to share a little of that? What happened?
[56.16] FP	Yes, well. I finally arranged with my wife and I brought her. So, the children, all the other children, except the first one, were born here, in Carolina, all of them.
[56.33] SK	So, you settled down here and formed a big family, you did well. You prospered.
[56.40] FP	Yes. But working was hard here because this country does not give you anything for free [laughs] working, I worked all my life. Until fifteen years ago, let's say, sixteen hours a day. For example, the crisis in nineteen seventy-three and seventy-four was a difficult crisis here

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	<p>in this country, that there was no gasoline. So [sample] you got there to the Augusta Road and there were two hundred cars lined up to buy a bit of gasoline.</p>
[57.12]	<p>One dollar. So, one had to transport several in a single car, right? So, it was a very difficult crisis, the factories barely were open a week or two. Or two weeks yes and one week no. Or one yes and another no. So I got myself a job beyond Woodruff, in a town called Enory. And I lived here in Greenville and I went from here to Enory every day. Everyday.</p>
[57.41]	<p>Because they were giving me sixteen hours of work there. And on Woodruff road there was nothing but me driving[laughter] There I could count the cars that passed through Woodruff. During the day, the passing cars could be counted on both hands. It was a good, good job for me. Not everyone could say they were working.</p>
[58.11]	<p>Six days, sixteen hours, nobody could say this but myself. In short, it was another era. There in the company I worked sixteen hours, Jairo Martínez also did so. I lived more or less close to where we got good work, I went with Jairo.</p>
[58:31] SK	<p>And you raised a big family with this?</p>
[58:34] FP	<p>Yes, well...</p>
[58:36] SK	<p>So there was time to have some fun? To relax?</p>
[58:42] FP	<p>The fun usually in that era was family oriented, we went to say the lake, Anderson. And bought chicken or Chinese food there and went there and there ate it and stayed for the rest of the day. That was what we did ..., The other distractions were in my house, there we all got together and those who were from Colombia that were brought by the JP, met in my house. I lived in a big house there</p>
[59:11]	<p>down Augusta Road, there they went and they spent the weekend. Dancing, screaming, doing everything, there telling stories. Well, things happened to one that are like a joke. Definitely here I have lived very good, very good. I have had everything that I have wanted,</p>

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	<p>everything I have wanted, I have had here. In Colombia I could never have done it, everything I wanted, I had here.</p>
[59.40]	<p>So for that I feel very thankful to this country. I had many jobs with very good work, I had very good work because I worked with very good companies. I worked assembling machinery, then I started a business from my money, and I traveled around the world doing installations.</p>
[60:18]	<p>And, I made a lot of money, and with the fall of the textile industry the business did not work anymore, but..</p>
[60.19] SK	<p>And when did the textile industry fall?</p>
[60.21] FP	<p>The textile industry began to fall more or less for years, I would say that from nineteen seventy-eight and up. The textile industry began to fall. It started to fall as a result of what I had said, that people think that the factory owners owned the machines, but it was not so, all that the machinery was on lease.</p>
[60:51]	<p>The lease would expire during [inaudible] And the main reason, I do not know if you are interested in knowing that, mainly people believe and hear say that the industry migrated to China and yes, the industry did go to China. But because it could not work here. Why did it not work? Many people do not know why. Technically, people do not know why.</p>
[61.20]	<p>I do know, because I was already involved in that. Because I bought the machines, right? I knew, what, what was the problem, Brandon Mills closed. Why? Because here there was a virus that in English they called "Brown Lung" or brown lungs. But that was a name that was given to it, as the flu can be called something else, right?</p>
[61.50]	<p>But that was practically cancer. That was what it was. Then the lawsuits became a very difficult thing.</p>
[62:04] SK	<p>Was that then a cancer produced by the textile industry?</p>
[62.07] FP	<p>Yes. The lint, as it is called, which is what cotton or the synthetic fiber releases right? And that goes to the lungs. So the first thing that is</p>

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<p>[62.32] SK</p>	<p>affected in your body in the textile industry is the ears and then the lungs. You become deaf, and then your lungs.</p> <p>Do the machines make a lot of noise?</p>
<p>[62.35] FP</p>	<p>Yes! ohh! The best tool there was in such a factory was a shout or a flashlight. So I lit it from here to there so that the person I needed on the other side and [sound] And you would know the person would come soon. And the shout, but the shout was lost in the sound of the machinery. But...</p>
<p>[63.00] SK</p>	<p>And they gave you guys something to protect yourselves?</p>
<p>[63.04] FP</p>	<p>Yes, but it turns out that some did not like to use that. No, but at the end it was said at the factory, if you did not have that on, you were fired. Then there was a time when they called you to blow, why did not you blow? Because before you started working, they put you in a room and put a machine on you and you had to blow a hose like a vacuum hose, right? and they put a tube on you, like the disposable toilet paper tubes. And you had to take a deep breath and blow.</p>
<p>[63.36]</p>	<p>Hard! It was really hard. Then that machine measured the thoracic capacity, and if you did not blow at a certain level, they did not give you a job. And there were many people who remained out of work because they could not blow.</p>
<p>[63.55] SK</p>	<p>And why did they do it?</p>
<p>[63.58] FP</p>	<p>Because. For cancer in the lungs.</p>
<p>[64.00] SK</p>	<p>Oh, they wanted to hire people who had strong lungs?</p>
<p>[64.04] FP</p>	<p>Yes. But then the government imposed a law that as a factory owner, you had to have some filters in the rooms. And those filters were a complete wall and you saw it and it had mesh. And after that mesh there was a paper filter, right? like a filter of the air conditioner, the same thing.</p>

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[64.32]	And you did not have time, and I determined it because I was so involved in it and I realized that. There was a mechanism in which that paper was moving slowly, right? when the factory was working. So, they did not have to renew the paper, but it was changing itself. But it had to go through some pipelines under the floor, it was going through some pipelines
[65.02]	and the installation of that mechanism, the government said that in order to function the mills had to have that immediately. And the installation of each room was worth ten million dollars. Then, the factory said no. And they gave you some time and if you have up to ... let's say a year, two years, three years. right? If in three years you have not done it you had to close. Then those people said, "We'd rather close than spend that money"
[65.35]	That's where it came from, and [inaudible]. China has not bought so much. [inaudible] But China has not bought. Because the Chinese do not buy obsolete old machinery. They buy new machinery. Those who bought all that was India and Pakistan, uh, Bangladesh, uh, Sri Lanka.
[66:14]	They bought all the machinery that was being removed here from the United States. The Chinese bought machinery, but modern machinery. Let's say you had a hundred new looms that had barely worked for one or two years. They, they bought that, but not junk. They did not buy scrap metal.