

Jennifer Rading

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Interviewer Rashpal Sehmbay camera Don Bouzek

Q: What is your union, and your position in it?

JR: I am no longer part of the union but I was part of CUPW, which is Canadian Union of Postal Workers. I was in the Edmonton local. When I was working for Canada Post I was what we called PO4, which is a clerk that deals with mail on the floor in the plant.

Q: Where were you born?

JR: I was born in Ottawa, Ontario.

Q: Did you grow up there?

JR: I did, yes.

Q: How did your folks make a living?

JR: My father was a musician. He played for an old rock and roll band called the Five Man Electrical Band. He worked in that industry for my entire life, and aside from that he did work as a basic contractor for homes and houses. He went in and did people's homes up. My mother worked alongside her two childhood best friends at Dairy Queen. They all basically owned it. That was my life growing up. My dad's name was Brian Rading; he was the bassist. I had a very eclectic background. My dad, being in the rock and roll world, lived in the world of very free and expressive and artistic. My mother was very conservative and Catholic, and I went to a Catholic school. During the week I was in Catholic school and on the weekends I was with my dad and his music in bars and concerts and stuff. So I had a very interesting upbringing.

Q: What was your first home like. Was there plumbing, was there electricity?

JR: Oh god ya, oh ya.

Q: You probably wouldn't have survived without that stuff.

JR: I am a glamper so ya I would not have been able to survive.

Q: What education have you received?

JR: I've been in a constant state of education. After I graduated high school I studied theatre at a performing arts school. I did a partial machining trade when I was younger as well, because I was curious about what it was like to work with tools. Then I decided I wanted to go and do my university degree in psychology, so that's what I did. I had at that point also become a safety advisor for the oil and gas industry, so I've got a lot of education in that world. I've also done a lot of other type of education in and around my personal professional performance and training.

Q: Were you brought up in any specific cultural tradition?

JR: Very French and very Irish Catholic. Very strict in a certain way, but also fun. I didn't have any real specific cultural background. I think if I was to pick any, it would be French background.

Q: Did you parents both move to Alberta, or was it just you?

JR: When I finished high school I actually moved to Alberta, first B.C. and then Alberta. Then I eventually went back home and finished my degree, then I moved back to Alberta. I actually love Alberta.

Q: What sort of conditions or welcome did you find here when you came?

JR: To Alberta? Oh my gosh, I love Alberta. I found Alberta to be very, just calmer. I found people to be more respectful. Not to say that people aren't respectful anywhere else, but

Alberta has a definite culture to it that I felt more at ease around. I remember when I first moved to Calgary and I was standing on the side of a road, and cars stopped on both sides to let me walk across the street. I went across the street and I turned around and I just had this moment of wow. In Ottawa, if you cross the street you have to run because they will try to find a way to hit you; I'm only kidding. But it was just a calm, like I felt very comfortable here.

Q: What was your first job?

JR: Dairy Queen, my mother, nepotism at its finest. I was about 14 and I worked there for a couple of years. That was my first training.

Q: What do you remember about the terms and conditions under which you worked at that time?

JR: It was very comfortable. We had a set of rules that we had to work with. The people that we worked around were respectful. I think the hardest thing was actually working with my mom. But aside from that, I remember at 14 just being really aware that things on the floor had to be picked up if they fell on the floor, like slipping hazards for example, because you drop ice cream it's going to turn into a problem if you walk on it and slip. Clean up after you go, just be aware of corners and things of that nature, and hot spaces, because we made hot food. I was very aware at a very young age about safety.

Q: What about the hours of work?

JR: I was really young, so it was perfect for me with school, balancing the two. If I'm looking at all the work that I've ever done in terms of safety, every company that I've ever worked at has had safety in place, especially working in the oil industry and especially working in on sites. Safety was the priority for everybody. We're walking liabilities, basically, if you don't create a space where everyone is safe.

Q: What was your relationship to you boss and coworkers at the Dairy Queen?

JR: It was perfect; I had no issues. I was really young though; I was only 14. But I had a great relationship with them. We were all just having fun. Why would not love working with ice cream every day?

Q: What was your first serious full-time employment?

JR: My very first serious employment was in safety actually. I had worked in the oil industry in safety administration, but my very first actual real job was working for an international construction company. I was hired specifically to create a behaviour-based safety program from scratch and to work alongside computer programmers who could deal with what we were implementing, because we were dealing with a rather large program.

Q: What do you remember about the terms and conditions of that work?

JR: The relationship that I had to my upper boss, who I spoke with directly around this particular project, it was very serious. It was people's lives that we were dealing with, that's why we were implanting a behaviour-based safety program. The hours were structured so that if I had to work overtime, I got paid for it. But it was a lot of work, it was a lot of focus and concentration. The hours were fine, I had no issues with those at all. It was perfect, actually.

Q: Can you describe a typical workday?

JR: First thing in the morning, we would have what was called a toolbox talk. We would congregate, a whole bunch of us, in different areas of the site. We would actually be together and somebody would read over the safety information of the day that someone chose. It could've been anything on trips and falls or hazards in the workplace or just even driving conditions and making sure that everyone got to work safely and got back from work safely – just anything relating to safety. So that was a great way for everyone to say hi and good morning, and then we would go on our day. My typical day was dealing with people, especially in the first part of the program being built. I would have to go out and talk to workers. I would

go out and speak to tradespeople and just hear what they had to say. They're experts in their field, and I needed to know what they knew, so that would be part of the conversation I would have with them. What I found really empowering was the fact that by me giving them a chance to speak on what they knew, it empowered them. That really created a good culture, so that's what I really appreciated about what I was doing. It was building, but everybody was part of it. When it actually finished and I got to roll it out, a lot of people in that company, all the trades people, and there were hundreds of them – they all did feel like they were part of the program itself.

Q: What problems do you remember?

JR: The biggest problems were, well first of all if we're talking problems, we're talking more on the programming side and dealing with the programmers, but also with some in management. Most of the management were great, but then there were some that I think felt like because I was doing a lot of the work, that they wanted to be part of it too, so they were putting themselves in my way to my ultimate goal. They weren't allowing me to move and do what I needed to do all the time in order to get the work done. And some of the tradesmen were not always the easiest to talk to. But that's part of the job, you deal with some people that are not willing to work with you. That would be probably one of the bigger obstacles and problems I had.

Q: What did you like about the job?

JR: I got recognition for what I was doing. I was getting recognition for what I was doing, I was getting recognition for putting something together. I got to see an end result, I got to see the progression of the program being done and everything being put together.

Q: What skills did you need to do your work, and how did you acquire them?

JR: Lots of education, lots of experience in that industry, lots of just being in people's worlds in that industry. When you're in the world of safety, for example, you get to be aware and hear

what other people's worries and concerns are. That was really something that I got to put together, I got to experience, I should say. I was able to just use all these different areas of skills and knowledge that I was acquiring through dealing with all different people in all different areas of this company. At the end of it all, I was able to just amalgamate what I knew, and create this international program.

Q: What changes did you see in your work throughout your life?

JR: If I were to take what I know from working in the oil and gas industry and safety industry, for example, and move into Canada Post, I can honestly say that it was really disturbing to say the least. We typically like to see what people are doing on a due diligence perspective. For me in the industry I worked in for so many years, seeing that the company is actually moving forward and being proactive instead of reactive is really key to seeing a company in their safety. When I went to work for the post office it was actually really shocking how they lacked something that was so fundamentally important to people's lives. Their culture was really quite diminished. It was a shock to me. I remember walking in and seeing paperwork up in the workplace from five years ago, with signatures dated from five years ago in the world of safety, which is actually not okay. That shows complete lack of respect to the workplace and to the people that work there. It just shows that they don't take safety seriously, and that's a big issue for me with my background.

Q: Were you ever injured at work?

JR: Yes, I've had a few injuries. But I think if I'm going to speak about what happened to me most recently, the injury that happened to me most recently was I would say a human rights violation, which hurt me on an emotional, mental, cognitive level. I have actually dealt with a lot of things in my career, but when it came to working in this particular place, the damage that got done to me on an emotional level was so much that I had to actually leave the job. I've never done that in my life, leave a job that I'd had such a long career with.

Q: In the job you're describing, were there mostly women doing the work?

JR: No, it was men and women.

Q: What about women in management?

JR: I feel like there were more men that were in positions of leadership.

Q: Did you ever have a mentor at this workplace?

JR: I have a few people that were amazing, that I felt really stand for people – you, for example, and quite a few other people as well. But at the end of the day, there's only so much that can be done at the surface level. I could see the exhaustion coming into play, because it's one person after another after another after another going to these people that had the most access to information, who were also part of the union. The process itself was not workable for people, because you had to literally take a number and find a way to get in line and deal with what was happening at the time. I think everybody at the workplace for the most part, if you had an issue to deal with, everyone was pretty much available to talk about it and deal with it with you.

Q: Did you face any barriers or challenges as a woman?

JR: Oh ya, where do I start? This is one of the areas that I felt was most shocking, that a crown corporation who have policies in place, that had all these documents in place from upper management, there was no action around it. It's lip service, in my opinion. I had to be off work for a certain amount of time because of health reasons. I came back with a doctor's note and it was, well I'll just say it – I had a hysterectomy, and I was actually treated very poorly by my supervisors, by the superintendent. It was as though what I had to deal with was not important. Any issue around my safety and my health was completely dismissed in order to have more production, which is actually illegal.

Q: When did you first come in contact with a trade union?

JR: With Canada Post.

Q: The name of the union?

JR: Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Q: Did you belong to the Edmonton local?

JR: The Edmonton local, yes.

Q: What do you remember about this union?

JR: The local union, I felt since certain people got into power and the positions, were doing an amazing job. I felt safe with them. I felt like they were really working hard to ensure that things were being acknowledged and that they were bringing the issues that were actually going on in the workplace to Canada Post management. I felt like they were doing their work for us.

Q: What action did the union take regarding the incident you experienced?

JR: Immediately after my first incident with my supervisor, I had a grievance written up and it was sent in to our grievance officer at the local union. After that, something would happen pretty much daily, and it would just get added to the grievance. It was just one thing after another. It was like a sliding scale. I felt like I had become a target, and if you look at my grievances you'll see the dates and how everything happened and the escalation. It all started because I was not able to lift over 10 or 15 pounds, and there was an issue around that. It was due to being a woman and having had a hysterectomy.

Q: Do you remember any actions or programs to support other workers?

JR: If our national union did anything? I felt like our national union did basic minimum to deal with what was going on in our plant. They were aware of it. There wasn't any action that was



really taken that was noticeable in an effective way. They did roll out something Canada-wide requesting that people who had issues with harassment, human rights, contact them and send them emails with their stories about it. That was pretty much all that I saw as an action that they took. It was actually very reactive, not proactive. In light of being at this point where the Me Too movement was at its peak at this point as well, it would've been the perfect opportunity for our national union to do something in light of what was going on with a lot of women in the workplace. And men too, but I say women because I'm a woman and I know that there were quite a few women in my plant who had some very serious problems with management and harassment and human rights violations. I just was really very disappointed by the lack of action taken by our national union. Our local union, however, did really a great job. They were supportive, they took all our calls, they had meetings with us. We felt heard and we felt like they really cared about us.

Q: Do you remember the way the union was run?

JR: On our local union I do; I was part of the process. I was very happy to do that and to ensure that proper elections were done. All the ballots were counted properly, so I was part of that. I am aware of how people in positions in our union are elected. I feel like it is a fair process.

Q: Tell us about some leaders or role models you remember.

JR: I remember a certain man named Rashpal Sehmbly. Rashpal and I met when we were on the floor in the Edmonton plant working. Rashpal has always been a supportive person in anybody's issues regarding labour laws, human rights, and safety. It was easy to talk to him. There was no question in my mind that he knew what he was talking about, and if he didn't know he'd find out. He also had no problems at all going up to management or supervision and asking them questions about what was happening, and bringing in of course our union contract and seeing how things were not working between us on the floor and them. I have created a good relationship with quite a few shop stewards in the plant. Like I said before, they're great to deal with, especially if they know the contract, they know the laws, and they've been in arbitration.

So I think that would probably be number one mentor. I don't really have anyone else that I would really say is my top mentor.

Q: Were ever involved in a strike or walkout?

JR: I have not. But I've been very supportive of it online when there were articles that would come out from different news, just articles written that would all favour the crown corporation as opposed to the people. Reading some of the comments, I would often add my comment in that would somehow attempt to bridge the gap that's not being stated in the article.

Q: Could you describe the health and safety issue that you experienced?

JR: The problem with Canada Post in terms of what happened with me, they have policies in place where if I am dealing with a health issue, that it is to be taken seriously. Putting someone in a position to hurt themselves after a doctor's note has been issued stating that they are to be on a modified duty or something along those lines, is just not okay. That is something that is a blatant disrespect for human life. It is a blatant disrespect for the person's health, their safety, and the safety of other people around them. If I get injured, I could also injure someone else without wanting to. At the end of the day, the whole idea of having safety in the workplace and having these policies in place is to ensure that the company doesn't get sued – that's why they have these in place. Canada Post doesn't seem to care about that. Canada Post doesn't seem to care about people's safety and what happens, because they probably have all these lawyers in line just waiting to get the next lawyer letter from an employee. I don't know, but it just seems odd to me that they just don't care. It's right up to the top, because even speaking with the head of the health and safety department for Canada Post, he was really completely disrespectful to us as well as a group of girls that were trying to deal with something that was really important to us with regards to our health and safety. It almost felt like he was just brushing us under the rug, like it didn't matter. We had a call with this man, we described what was happening. He said he understood what was happening, he said it to us. Then he turned around and did the opposite of what he said he was going to do. This is someone that's right at

the top. Safety culture comes from the top; it doesn't come from the bottom, it comes from the top. We as workers should not have to fight for our safety rights.

Q: Had you ever received any training on this issue?

JR: In safety? Yes. I have the Alberta Construction Association safety obviously – that's a really simple but in-depth education. Then of course the years and years of work experience, being in the actual world of safety.

Q: How did you realize that this was an issue?

JR: How did I notice that? When I'm speaking to a supervisor, for example, and they don't get what I'm saying. When I'm talking to their superintendent, and that superintendent doesn't get what I'm saying. Or they say they get it, and then you start asking them more questions, and they just don't know how to answer you. The paperwork that they have to fill out in safety is so basic that it doesn't do anything, it doesn't solve problems, it's not proactive. It's going to turn into a complete reactive position, because now people are going around, they're going to get hurt, something's going to happen and we're going to have to deal with the aftermath. It's also someone's life at stake.

Q: How did this affect your work, your family, and the community?

JR: In terms of my life, in terms of what happened to me, which I haven't discussed openly because I can't right now, but how it affected me was I could not sleep at night, I could not concentrate. I was anxious, and I do not have anxiety. But when I'd walk into work, I would feel a high level of anxiety come over me to the point where I'd feel sick to my stomach. I just felt like being in that environment, in that world and culture, was very hard. Nothing I did that was attempted at this point from our union to get changes made, it was just all on paper and nothing was actually being done. It just felt like it was all for nothing. Nobody in management cared.

Q: How did you decide to follow up on this?

JR: It was a consistent following up. It was ridiculous actually, the amount of stuff that was going to management, coming back, going to management, coming back, going to management, oh another grievance going in, another grievance going in, now there's something else. It was consistently not working. Our local union, what they were doing was in constant progression of trying to get an answer and something done. We were getting emails, emails were going back and forth, so we have a lot of documentation showing that there was a lot of attempts to get stuff changed and fixed and acknowledged. When you look at the responses back from Canada Post management, it's like nobody really knew what to do. The training was so basic for them on how to deal with what was actually happening, nobody knew what to do. Whose fault is that? I go right to the top. If you ask enough questions, you'll find that it's the person at the top. So the person at the top, when you ask them a question and they turn around and say, well we have policies in place, like what happened after someone mentioned it to Justin Trudeau at one of his town hall meetings. It actually became part of the news, around harassment in Canada Post. It was, oh we have policies in place for that.

Q: Were there any challenges or obstacles to trying to solve the problem?

JR: Oh absolutely. It was ridiculous. I have a joke now about it, that at one point what actually occurred from the minute that my grievance went in to present right now, and it's ongoing still, they'll be able to use what happened as a case study of what not to do on a management level. Obstacles, I wouldn't even call it obstacles, because it like the wall that wouldn't really respond and do anything.

Q: Then what happened?

JR: I consistently in conversation with my local union, emails and meetings would take place around the health and safety in the workplace, human rights violations in the workplace, dealing with harassment in the workplace. I was advised to go to the Human Rights Commission on the federal level and put something in there; they accepted that. It's been three years in the

process. The amount of steps that were taken – rewriting what happened short form, two pages, one paragraph – it was just on a constant basis. Every single time we turned around we – because there was actually quite a few of us women who were dealing with similar issues in this place from the Canada Post plant in Edmonton – many of us had to be consistently reliving what happened. Every area and avenue that our union took to try to have this dealt with, they would request something else of us to do, to write, to send in. It was just paperwork after paperwork after paperwork to no end. I felt like there was nothing being solved. So obstacles I would say would be just having us constantly rewrite it and constantly hear what’s not going on. We did have at one point an investigation into what was going on. They brought in an incompetent person to deal with our situation. It was biased, because it was an internal person. It’s in legislation that when there’s a company dealing with human rights violations of this sort, they’re required to bring in a competent unbiased person. They have yet to do that, and it’s been over three years now. The issues that we were dealing with were not dealt with again, after having to relive it. I had to relive it, and that just added to my feelings of anxiety, and that just added to my emotional turmoil in the workplace. How do you go to work with somebody in a place who just had you relive what happened in front of two women who you thought were on your side, and then they turn around and don’t deal with it at all. They put the person that we were dealing with and having the issue with back on the floor on the same position, so a lot of us had to deal with him. A lot of us had some form of retaliation, and that’s also illegal in terms of human rights violations. Having someone back on the floor who you have just had investigated, not just you but four or five other women who were all claiming and saying very similar things. I don’t know any of their stories, but I do know that it was around the same issues and the same people. They did nothing about it at all. How do you go to work? How do you work for someone like that and how do you go to work around people like that? You can’t. It affects you on a psychological level that is and was, from my psychologist, he said, you need to leave.

Q: What was the result?

JR: Well we have no results yet. We’re still waiting. Right now, the federal Human Rights Commission is looking it over. We currently have a legal team dealing with our situation,

because our union has done everything that they could and Canada Post has refused to deal with what's going on. Now we're dealing with the Human Rights Commission, and that in itself is an issue too. Nothing happens overnight and I get that, but there's an urgency to what needs to happen urgently, which is people's rights need to be taken a lot more seriously. Women's rights need to be taken a lot more seriously. Everyone's rights need to be taken a lot more seriously. As far as what I've experienced, everything is really well written on paper and everyone really loves to delegate. Nobody wants to take responsibility and accountability for what's going on, because that means that they have to act on it and deal with it. I don't think anyone really knows what they're doing or how to deal with it. I'm hoping the Human Rights Commission federally are the last ones that we have to deal with, because enough is enough. It's been too long and there's been a lot of people who have suffered because of the length of time it's taken to deal with this. It could've been handled in the first couple months and it would've have escalated to the point that it is right now and affected me and others in the way it has.

Q: What role did your union take in this process?

JR: Our national union I felt just sort of dipped their toes in it a little bit, and that's about it. They also were not really doing anything effective. In terms of accountability, they're not necessarily to blame for the actions of Canada Post. But in terms of what they are for us workers, they're responsible to take on what we're asking them to take on, and that is to deal with what is actually happening in the workplace under human rights violations and harassment, all of those things. They're huge issues, and it's not getting better because nobody is wanting to deal with it. Nobody wants to look at it and look at what is actually going on. Is it training and sitting in front of a computer and doing a 20-minute course? No, it's actually having people responsible for what their actions are. No one seems to be doing that anymore. I have no words. Like I said, when all's said and done, all what has happened to myself and the other women, in this case when you're going to go and look back at all the things we had to do to get to where we are right now, and you're going to see the obstacles and just the length of time it's taken for everything happen to get to this point where really nothing is even yet, there's no results yet. But when you read everything, your mind is going to be blown at the lack of

accountability that has happened on many different sides. As workers, we're in the middle and we're being forgotten; we're getting completely tossed under the rug. No wonder people don't say anything. People don't say things anymore, because it takes so long. On the psychological side, your mind, you have to deal with retaliation. You have to deal with constant what's going on, what's going to happen to me next, what's going to happen to me next? If I say something about a supervisor or someone in management violating my rights, especially my rights as a woman, where is that going to lead me? It's going to be quitting or getting fired. I had to leave my job because of that; I just couldn't handle the environment anymore.

Q: How did this experience make you feel?

JR: I want to help other people. I am completely aware that what I'm saying is going to be put out for the public to listen to. I hope everyone hears that being part of something like this is really important. I know that even though it's a pain and it's affected me on many different levels, it'll be worth it in the end. I feel like justice will prevail, if only everyone can just get out of each other's way and just get to the finish line and work together. I know people in Canada Post are still good people. I just think that they're under their own constraints of not actually knowing how to handle certain situations, and also not wanting to lose their job or get in trouble. They want to look good. They don't want to be in a position where they feel like they're causing more problems for their workers. We're all in the same boat, but unfortunately the boat is not going very far – it's sinking. The way I feel about what's happened is complete and utter disappointment.

Q: How have you changed?

JR: After I left the Post Office, I just felt instant relief. I felt more powerful, I got that breath of fresh air. There was a sadness too, because I did have to walk away from a company that I'd been with for quite a while off and on – I'd been with the company for 17 years. I gave up my pension, benefits, my union position, and everything like that, just so that I could not deal with what I was feeling while being in that work environment. My health and my safety is more important to me than anything. It's not important to them, but it is important to me. I put that

as a priority. Did my finances suffer? Absolutely. I suffered a lot in that process, but at the end of it I feel better that I was able to make the decision to leave and that I could. There are a lot of people who do not have the ability to walk away from a job like this, and who have to go into a place like that every single day and deal with the same crap, the same work environment, the same culture, the same issues that are putting their lives in danger. They have no escape and nothing is being done. That is not okay. People need to step up in a big way, because it's not going to get better. It's going to get worse, and it's proving that every single time. Even in the time that I was there in those few years that nothing was getting done, I saw this escalation downwards. If you get away with it, you're going to keep doing that, because you're going to get away with it again. There's no accountability.

Q: What would you say to other workers about health and safety participation?

JR: Be part of it - Participate and be aware of each other. Be aware of what other people are doing. If you see somebody doing something unsafe, go up and say something to them. You don't have to get upset about it; just say, hey you know what, this is actually going to hurt you; maybe rethink this. If you get in trouble for saying something, don't worry about it. At the end of the day, saving someone's life, saving someone from getting hurt, is way more powerful and empowering than someone coming up to you and giving you shit for saying something.

Q: Were there any reports of the problem to WCB?

JR: Yes, there was. My particular situation was denied because during the interview process it did not appear that my situation was, the situation that I was in in the interview, there was no result stating that I was in fact right and that my human rights were violated. In fact, none of the girls that were part of this investigation, none of us had anything about us being right. They gave all the credence and all the kudos to the person that did all the damage. I can't say this very well; can I say it over again? I'm going back to that moment. . .

Q: What was your job at Canada Post?



JR: I had been working at the post office as a postal clerk, so PO4 is what our classification is. We sort mail and we are in that whole processing system of getting mail that comes in, sorting it to wherever it needs to go, and sending it off.

Q: Could you describe the harassment that you went through?

JR: When I came back to work after I had my hysterectomy – and it was a partial hysterectomy, but it was still a hysterectomy – I had also just had two months of time off. I had a doctor's note that very specifically said that I am to be on a modified work and that I'm not allowed to lift anything over 15 pounds, because it's very dangerous, I just had major surgery and I'm healing. Lifting anything over a certain amount of weight could cause some major health issues, major problems. I could end up in the hospital again with internal bleeding, or anything could happen because of the health issue I was dealing with. It was what I would consider a disability, but it wasn't permanent.

Q: Was it a gradual return to work?

JR: It was a gradual return to work, yes. That was respected. However, at one point after about a week or so being back at work, and I was not handling anything too heavy, my supervisor came up to me and he pointed something out on my modified work form. It was something that was just a small detail that was missing. From that, he said that my modified work form was invalid, that it was no longer actually valid. Then he went and tried to send me to an area to work that required heavy lifting. I have the right to refuse; I said I would not go. He said, just go and try it, just do what you can. Because at that moment in time I wasn't in the space to have an argument, I did go. I stood there and I lifted a couple of things. They weren't heavy, and I did lift a few of them, then I got to some heavier things and then a few more heavier things. I had to ask people for help, which people around me were really gracious and they came and helped me. But I got stuck working in an environment and a place where I shouldn't have been. I shouldn't have been told to just try it, because just trying something could lead to major problems. I got left there, twice actually, on two separate sections where we're supposed to actually move from different areas, and I got stuck there. He didn't move me. He did that

because I had originally argued with him about it; originally I'd said something to him about not wanting to go. The next day, I actually felt a little bit of pain and burning, so I brought that to his attention the next day. That's when all the shit hit the fan. He didn't want to hear it, he didn't care, he blamed me for not telling him. He told me that I had to leave work right away. I told him I was fine. He told me that I was expected to go and not come back to work until I had a modified work form. I said, I have one, you have one in your hand; what's the problem? He was trying to get rid of me, stop me from working, which would affect my job pay, because of a small detail on a piece of paper that wasn't there. So that was the whole thing which caused a lot of stress for me. I'm at work, I'm fully capable of working. Just because I have a little bit of a disability and I can't lift heavy things, there are lots of other areas at work, lots of areas in the department I was working in, where I could lift and do my job perfectly fine with no problem. But he chose that one spot where I would have problems. So I had to get union representation involved, I had to get union involved. I went and had consultation with one of my union reps. He came in and talked to my supervisor and it was agreed upon that I would be okay to go and work. I didn't know why all of this happened in the first place, but I was made to feel wrong, that there was something wrong with me, that I didn't belong there and that I had to leave. It was all because of that one little piece of thing on the modified work form that he had to point out and make a big deal out of. Then later on in that shift he came up to me while I was working and he was at that point very agitated and angry. This is what I got from this, is he was trying to dominate me and I wasn't allowing him to. I had gotten someone to come and deal with it, and that later turned out to be a problem for him in the future. Every time I needed some kind of union representation, he blocked it. He would actually make it so that I could not see a union rep. This was actually probably one of the worst experiences of my entire life there. I was working and he came up to me and started yelling at me very loudly. It was more of an agitated, like going up and up in voice and tone. He tried to bully me into a different story. I think what he did, what he went and talked to his manager about, I don't think it went very far, and he had to deal with me instead of the manager. So he was left to deal with me on something that he had created, which he didn't have to do. He was just more and more agitated. He started trying to coerce me into saying things that I didn't say, and he got angrier and angrier. The woman who was working next to me afterward said, that's workplace violence. I said, I know. So it started off where I was just coming to work with a modified work form, and now I'm getting yelled at and

coerced into trying to say something that didn't happen between him and I. Then he's glaring at me, like walking by me and glaring at me and glaring at me. I'm like, what is going on? He at this point as well had been talking to his superintendent and other coworkers, and before I knew it, in other shifts going forward, I had some retaliation going on now. Now my personal information about my health is now known to a lot of people, and it's personal, and I'm pretty sure Canada Post has a policy around that too. But my personal health information has now been discussed with a whole bunch of other people. I ended up dealing with one of his fellow coworkers, another man, another supervisor, and in this particular case he came up to me and was trying to get me to verbally say that I was the problem – that I was the problem, not this particular supervisor. It was really quite shocking; I couldn't even believe it. Then speaking to the superintendent about being harassed, and the superintendent saying, no that's not possible, that would never happen from this supervisor. Well lo and behold, this particular superintendent had been told probably 50 times if not more of problems with this particular supervisor, and mostly regarding women.

Q: Do you know of harm that was done to others, also?

JR: I don't know specific details; I do know that it was the same supervisor. The same supervisor who I had to deal with in regards to my medical health was very well known to be sexually harassing women, a lot of women. Unfortunately, not many of them came forward. But if you were to ask them behind closed doors, a lot of the women in that workplace would have a story to tell about this particular supervisor and what he said or propositioned. . .

As I was saying, if you were to go in and take a sample of women from that particular time of the evening that these managers and supervisors and superintendents were working, you would hear a very common theme, and that would be on the side of harassment, workplace violence, and sexual harassment. Now some of the women who have dealt with this have come forward, who were part of, for example, the investigation that I spoke about earlier, who got told that there was nothing wrong with what this man, this supervisor did. We're all in the same boat. Now we have come forward and our lives have been affected because of it in a negative way – not just psychologically, but emotionally and financially. Now why would anybody come forward? That's my question. The process, the system – the way that it's all put together that

gives the illusion that if you do come forward you'll be taken care of and everything will work out – is a lie.

Q: Has this harasser been removed from the work floor?

JR: He wasn't when we brought him in the first time and had him investigated. They put him back on the floor in the same position with me and some of the other girls. So that was fun, not. Then he was removed from the floor again because he went on to sexually harass more women, because he got away with it. So they removed him from the floor again and put him on suspension with pay, while women who were the victims in this had to go and deal with the investigation. They had to talk to the investigator and relive it all again. He was, as far as I'm concerned, removed; but from what I've heard, they didn't fire him. What I heard from multiple sources who are in management, is that he was given an ultimatum. He was given an ultimatum that he could either move back to Toronto and start work back in Canada Post there, or to quit. Accountability, there was none. Responsibility for any of the actions taken from anybody, not done. Nobody was held accountable and there was no responsibility from anybody on what was going on in that place.

Q: Did you and the other victims meet at any point to try to deal with things together?

JR: Quite quickly in the process, we became very close. It was obviously that we needed to be supportive of each other, because we were all dealing with the same exact thing. We didn't have knowledge of each other's stories but we knew the gist of what happened between us. That was in itself the connection between us, which I will say was really one of the most positive things. There really is something very beautiful and positive when women come together and support each other. We had each other's backs, we spoke to each other, we were able to listen to each other's frustrations around what was going on at the workplace and how we constantly had to be rewriting and reliving it in different ways just because one avenue wasn't being handled properly and we had to do another one and another one. We had this connection between us, dealing with what was going on.

Q: How did your local union respond to you getting together?

JR: Our local union, first they kept us, because they're also about confidentiality. So at first it was all very confidential, and no one knew who each other were. A few of us knew, but not all of us. Then eventually our local union had the initial meeting where we all got to meet each other. That was really powerful, sitting in a room with other women who were going through the same thing, and just hearing each other's frustrations and the emotional impact of what was going on. Just knowing that you were not alone, that out of the negative side, it was actually the positive side of it.

Q: What message would you send to this and other employers regarding the harassment you and others faced?

JR: The message to every single employer in this world around human rights and women's rights and dealing with it – just deal with it. Just do the right thing. Policies are there for a reason, legislation is there for a reason, but as a human being you outrank a piece of paper. Do the right thing, listen to what's going on. People are not going to come out and start lying, especially in a group like the way that we had it. Look at the evidence, bring in the right people for the job, do the right thing. It's a person's life you're dealing with. You're dealing with someone's life, their home life; they take that home. It's not okay to not deal with it, so deal with it.

Q: What barrier did your employer have in not wanting to deal with this?

JR: It comes down to wanting to look good in the public eye. Everything about who we are as human beings is about looking good. That's why we lie, that's why we say what we say. That's why things happen where you want to just avoid responsibility. The Me Too movement was a big movement, it was a big step for women. Women stood together and said, no more. They pointed fingers and said, no this isn't happening anymore. We are not staying silent, we are not going to let somebody get away with something just because I want something more. A lot of the actresses would get I'm sure a position or acting gig because of just not saying anything

about what happened to them. A lot of them didn't, either, and I love that they spoke up about it. But women in general, the women in this world are so strong and so powerful, when we standing together power in numbers. When Me Too came out, that was a powerful moment. I loved that women started to feel more powerful because they have a voice. I think it's just about not having a voice. Nobody's going to believe. I have a voice, I know I have a voice, and I'm still dealing three years later with something that should've been handled within months of me dealing with it and bringing it to the attention of my employer. Three years – that's ridiculous. I have a voice, believe me I have a voice. I don't have a problem standing up for my rights. But there's a lot of women that do have a problem with that, because they're scared. In terms of women in this world, the workplace or anywhere, standing up for your rights, standing next to people, standing next to women who are standing up for their rights – you get power from that. The more you do that, the more powerful you're going to get, and then you can create your own Me Too movement, even if it's just an individual one. Just be present to what you are capable of, and that I think is what the Me Too movement really stood for. I was really disappointed at the lack of support from every single organization that I was looking at for help dealing with what was going on.

Q: What would be a health resolution for you?

JR: At the end of the day, what would be a healthy resolve for me is to see this come to a healthy end soon. I would like for the federal Human Rights Commission to stand up and recognize the lack of integrity that has actually been at play this whole time, and to to be a part of it. Right now, I haven't heard back from them yet, and it's been a while, so they're also sitting on it. I get that they have a lot to deal with, but I also think that they need to look at what actually has gone on, and get out of their paper and look at the actual reality of what's happened. It's too often that people get stuck in that mentality of paperwork, it's all on paper, and it's not dealing with the actual person. What would really be amazing is at the end of it all the people who need to take responsibility for what happened are taking responsibility. Forced is the only way that they're going to take responsibility, but people in the post office need to be taking a lot more accountability for what's going on in all the areas in Canada that they're

working in. And the women, like myself, we get to hear that it's over and that the people who needed to take accountability are now being held responsible.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

JR: No, I think I've said it all.

Q: How is harassment considered a health and safety issue?

JR: I think when it comes to health and safety, anything relating to the psychological effects of a person's mentality, like your mentality, your ability to function in the world, your ability to come to work and work in a harassment-free environment, is health and safety. It's about your stress level. My particular situation was dealing with, I was actually diagnosed with a form of post traumatic stress disorder. That's health and safety.

Q: The kind of injury you had was invisible.

JR: Yes, and that in itself is part of why this is not considered as much of a health and safety issue as it should be. Speaking to therapists, psychiatrists, your doctor – they will all agree that it is a health and safety issue. It's actually in the occupational health and safety legislation booklet, I believe it's section 19 but don't quote me. But it will actually describe health and safety in the workplace under that. It's like any mental disability really – you don't see it. You can see the person on crutches or in a wheelchair or with the arm missing – that's a very clear disability. But when you have something of this nature occur at work where it's consistent, like it's not just over a couple of days or a couple weeks – this went over a couple years. We're not talking just a little bit. I spoke a bit on the situation, I didn't speak on the entire thing. But it did not stop. There was retaliation, there was constantly reliving the situation over and over again in trying to have it dealt with. It was just the constant, who in supervision is going to be trying to find a way to get me in trouble or to get me more stressed out around something? What's going to happen next? That's more what was going on. In that process, it's traumatic; you end up going through stress. Stress in the workplace is not even considered, well it is an issue, but it's

what comes from stress in the workplace. So lack of sleep – I couldn't sleep. I couldn't even concentrate. If you said something to me right now, back at that time I wouldn't remember it two seconds later – complete and utter inability to concentrate and remember anything. Those are all signs of trauma. Having sat with my psychiatrist a few times, he was able to diagnose me exactly with what happened and pinpoint it to being workplace related. It was from that experience. He also told me, you know what, it's not going to get better; you need to leave. When I left my work, it was because my doctor and psychiatrist both recommended that I take a leave forever. I'd taken leaves of absences and I'd taken short term disability through the post office. That was in itself a pain, because then I'd have to go and talk to that person about what happened at work and why I was going on short term disability. I had to go to my doctor all the time and have him fill out more paperwork and deal with it again. It was nonstop. It is complete and utter victimization of the victim in this entire process. It is unreal. So yes, it is a health and safety issue.

Q: At least the guy is ultimately out of there.

JR: Yes but not all of them, only him. And you know what they'll do? They'll take the person that's in trouble and try to relocate him somewhere else, then it's someone else's problem. It's the same person, though. You want to know something? Seventeen years ago when I started working at the post office, I started in the Ottawa plant. We had someone in upper management, because we worked where the main headquarters is located. They had brought a man back to work who's upper management who'd just got out of jail from killing his wife.

Q: Sounds like the Catholic church.

JR: I know, no accountability. They'll just take the priests and move them to another church in another city. Just watch Spotlight, you'll get a really good history of the problem from that movie. I'm Catholic, by the way; I think I mentioned that. But that's exactly it. What's happening with my situation and all the rest of the girls, I want this to become how not to deal with women. To be honest, if it had been handled in the first couple months, nothing. . . It wasn't just



that isolated moment with this asshole supervisor and all of his little colleague jerk friends, it was everything else too. It was all of it together.

Q: They just get shipped off to become someone else's problem.

JR: It's true. Canada Post does not take responsibility for very much. I don't know why, to be honest. I don't understand why. I have a slight suspicion that it's because somebody who is being slighted by them are going to go to the media. They always want to look very angelic to the public. Canada Post wants to look like they're the good guys, because when shit hits the fan and something comes up where they're not signing a contract and workers are going on strike, then they get to make the workers look like they're the reason why it's all going down. They don't take responsibility for nothing. It is unbelievable. Then having people actually say something about workers and how they're making so much money, it's so stupid. They feed into it. If you're working in Toronto and you take all the overtime and all the RD's, you could make up to \$100,000 a year. But you're not living your life, you certainly don't have a family life; you don't have anything except for work. So have fun with that. And we get paid so much. I remember I was at a pool in the hot tub. You sit around and talk to people, and there were these two older gentlemen. They said, where do you work? I said, Canada Post. One of them had this very negative thing to say about posties and how we don't work, we don't do our job, we get paid too much, just throwing it at me. His brother worked for Canada Post as a casual for one Christmas and he got something from his brother saying, I don't know. It was really strange. I just looked at him and said, if we didn't work, you would not ever get your mail. There would be no vehicles out on the road that say Canada Post. You would not get that gift from grandma or Amazon or any of those other things. I just laugh, because people are so, what's the word I'm looking for? They buy into the ideas without proof. Then here with Canada Post, they have so much proof and they're still not doing anything about it.

Q: Aside from this example, what else must be happening in other shops around the country?

JR: Our Prime Minister was told from someone in Winnipeg at one of his town hall meetings that there are some major issues in Canada Post around harassment. He didn't say much more;

I think that was about the gist of what he said. I read it in the newspaper. Our Prime Minister was like, really, well definitely we'll deal with that, because that's not good. Then nothing. Somebody that he delegated to was like, but we have a policy, look, we have it all written on paper.

Q: The only thing that happened out of that was the national office started the Bully Bosses Campaign.

JR: Yes, the Bully Bosses Campaign. That went, as far as I'm concerned, nowhere. Nothing came from it. Asking 45,000 posties to send in stories of stuff that's happened to them in the workplace, they don't have enough space in their email for that. They would've received so many that they don't have enough people to read it all. They wouldn't have enough space in their email. It would just get bombarded. I imagine that's what happened, because nothing came from it. What are they going to do about it? That's so knee-jerk reaction to what's actually going on, and yet in the moment when they could've been proactive alongside of us in what was going on, they did nothing. It just felt like they let the ball drop. There was a couple people that did some things; I don't want to leave out everybody from the national office. But it wasn't enough. It wasn't a strong enough stand. Myself and the rest of the women that are dealing with this at the moment, I believe we all felt not heard and not supported, and why are we paying our union dues? What are you doing? If there's ever a situation to stand with us, it's this, especially in the middle of the Me Too movement. It blew me away that nothing got done. My question is, why, why, why? Just why? But people on any level, it's about looking good. Nobody wants to look bad, because that means that as a human being you have to admit that there's something wrong with you. But you know what, there's something wrong with every single one of us. We're imperfectly perfect; we're all the same. Nobody wants to take responsibility unless you have to, because it makes you have to address something and put yourself almost at risk of things. Everyone wants to play it safe, and then hide behind that policy or hide behind someone else. That person who did our investigation originally, who was the incompetent unbiased investigator, I don't really think she was sitting there going, the findings are going to be. . . . Because each single finding around everything that every single one of us said. . . . And like I said, I don't know what anyone else had, but I know that we all agreed that this happened. Every

allegation that we had in support of what was actually going on with us in those moments with this particular supervisor, out of ten allegations they dealt with seven. From that seven, two of the allegations they'd mixed up witnesses, so there was witnesses that were used for the wrong allegation, so obviously it wouldn't match. Then the other ones were minor allegations, they weren't as serious, but they also just found nothing wrong. So they took the man's word over my word. They took the man at his word, which was a lie and my word, which was the truth, and they diminished it. Then the serious, serious allegations, they didn't even deal with it. If you read my findings report, you will see that. It's all on paper. And I will note that the findings report that I received had grammatical errors written all over it. When I noted that when we were doing the findings at the end of the investigation, when they said they actually found nothing really wrong with the guy but that he had a behaviour problem and they were going put him into some training, which turned into an emotional intelligence training. You can't teach emotional intelligence; you can't teach it. You certainly can't teach it on a course on computer online that's 20 minutes or whatever; you can't teach that. So that's what they did. We also weren't informed of anything around what he was being retrained on, and we were not told when he was actually coming back to the floor. We were not informed of that, we were not given proper information around that. We are actually required to have this information, and they did not do that. Like I said, every single thing, if you look, is really on how not to handle the situation that we were in. It's shocking to this day, and it's not going away. We're not going to stop fighting until we actually get what we want, and that is responsibility and accountability. How that looks, I have a few ideas, but I'm not going to say right now.

[ END ]