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THE FASHION INDUSTRY LEADERS

FRED POMERANTZ

LESLIE FAY, INC.

Dates of Interviews

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Interviewed by

Mildred Finger
The story of Fred Pomerantz, founder of Leslie Fay, Inc., is that of one of the greatest entrepreneurs of the garment industry. The business was founded in about 1938, incorporated in 1959, became a public company in 1962 (volume $16,000,000), and became "private" once again in 1982, at which time it was estimated to have achieved a volume of about $250,000,000.

Fred Pomerantz, born in 1903, started working before the age of 11, for a firm manufacturing coats and suits. Before the age of 20 he had gone into business with a brother. By the age of 31, he retired temporarily from the apparel business, went to California, lost $3,000,000 in various unsuccessful enterprises. Back in New York, he returned to the apparel industry.

In 1938, he launched Leslie Fay, Inc., naming the business using his daughter's name. In 1955, his son John, joined the firm. He set up and ran Joan Leslie, Inc. In 1972, John Pomerantz became the President of the parent company and Fred Pomerantz became the Chairman.
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Q. Now I really like you to start all the way back, as far back as you..., I know you've talked about when you were eleven years old, so I...
A. Ten and a half.
Q. Okay, ten and a half so start there, okay?
A. I'll start off with... In our family all of my brothers started to work when they were ten years old.
Q. How many brothers?
A. Four, including myself, three and myself is four. My other brothers were fortunate that they weren't in our business and they went to grammar school, grammar and high school, see. I went into the ready-to-wear business and at that time you worked from seven in the morning to eleven o'clock at night including Saturday and Sunday.
Q. And you were ten and a half?
A. I was ten, just about ten and a half. I got this job with Mr. B. Kaufman. M. B. Kaufman was a coat and suit business; it was a Mr. and Mrs. Kaufman that I worked for. It seems that I used to be a swimmer. I used to love to swim and I had my hair cut, you know, very, oh what, I forget what they call it now, but I had no hair it's like....
Q. Like a crew-cut?
A. Yeah. Like, worse than a crew-cut, it's like when you come out of an orphan home you wear that, they give you those kind of haircuts, you know, in those years, in I'm talking about seventy some odd years, seventy years ago. So, I got this job and they loved me, they thought I was an orphan, you know, and they gave me a job. And everything that they had to do home, I had to do it home during the slow season, you know? I did everything. Now, I started to work in the production department and I became a patternmaker. I made up, I made the patterns; I made everything I started off, when I was fourteen and a half years old, I was a very good patternmaker. I used to sew on the machine and make a garment on the machine. I knew I was good; I thought I was as good as my boss. Now, I was getting two and a half dollars a week and when I was fourteen and a half years old, my boss was fired and when he was fired, I went to the big boss, to Mr. Kaufman, and I said, I'd like to get Mr. Beck's job. He says, look, Mrs. Kaufman loves you, I love you, we're going to double your salary, you stay where you are, we're very happy with you.

Q. That was doubling to five dollars?
A. Yeah.

Q. A week?
Yeah. He probably didn't know that I was getting two and a half or one and a half, you know. So, I says, I didn't ask you for a raise, I asked you for Mr. Beck's job. He says, you can't handle Mr...., very steamed at me, you can't handle Mr. Beck's job. I says, who told you I can't handle Mr. Beck's job, I can handle it. So he fires me for insubordination. I went into the bookkeeper and got my pay and I, I'm leaving, and I'm waiting for the elevator to come up when who walks out--Mrs. Kaufman--she was the big boss. So I says, Mrs. Kaufman, it was very lovely working here, I enjoyed it and I learnt an awful lot and I think I owe it all to you that I, what I learned and..., she says, what are you talking about? So I says, I was fired, she says, what for? I says, insubordination, and I swear that I didn't know what insubordination meant, I swear, this is no kidding, on my word, I didn't know what insubordination meant but that's what I was fired for...insubordination.... So she says, what did you do? I says, I wanted Mr. Beck's job. I'll never forget this as long as I'll live, I can't remember what happened yesterday, but I can remember what happened years ago, she puts her fingers to my eyes and says, you want Mr. Beck's job? I said, yes, what do you got to lose if I get Mr. Beck's job? If I'm no good, I'll go right back to my old
job. If you hire somebody else, you won't..., you can't
fire them right away if they're no good, me you can fire,
I'll go back, all you got to do is come back and tell me
I'm not doing the job right and I'll go right back to my
old job. So she says, you little son-of-a-bitch, she
spoke like a, like a man, I think you're right, come on
back. So I go back and she goes into Mr. Beck's, Mr.
Kaufman's room, office, she comes back and she says, go in-
side and apologize to him. I said, apologize for what?
She says, you get your ass in there and apologize or I'll
knock it off, and that's exactly the way she spoke. I'm
giving you my word of honor; I'm quoting her exactly.
So I go inside and I says, Mr. Kaufman, I want to apolo-
gize for anything that I said or did to hurt your feelings
and I would really like to try Mr. Beck's job; I'm telling
you, you won't make no mistake. So he says, okay, you got
it. And I wasn't as good as Mr. Beck's job but I was much
better. I want to tell you they treated me like I was
king. They were very, very wealthy people, extremely
wealthy and when I was seventeen, they made a trip around
the world, and at that time it took them a year and I was
in charge of the company. The only thing I couldn't be
in charge of was the selling because I was embarrassed be-
cause in those days the patternmakers spoke Jewish, the
sample maker spoke Jewish, everybody spoke Jewish and we, all our production people spoke Jewish.

Q. Did you speak it with them?
A. Yes.

Q. You spoke it, but you also spoke English?
A. Yeah but, we spoke Jewish and I had to speak Jewish to all of them. So my language is dese, dose and dems, you know? So I couldn't go in a showroom so I had a, I had a man, that was in charge of the showroom but he reported to me, you know, and I want him to sell something, he had to sell what I want him to sell.

Q. Where was the showroom in those days?
A. Thirty-sixth Street, Thirty-second Street--6 West Thirty-second Street. And the, the Waldorf Astoria was right across the street so....

Q. So it was a pretty elegant area?
A. Yeah. It was a new building when, when they moved in. We were downtown before that. But when I was seventeen and a half, I ran the whole business. At that time, the Winter Garden used to be the big thing and I used to sit up front and they couldn't get my seats (laughter), they wonder..., they says, where do you get your seats? I says, I go and get them, when I want something I got it. It's just like I wanted the job, I got it, you know? I says, I
don't take no for an answer and I got them, if you want me to get you tickets, I'll get you tickets. And it was, every Sunday night it was a big night in Winter Garden and they used to make trips like, like anything, now they, they also had horses. So I used to....

Q. The Kaufmans?
A. Yeah. I used to take care of their horses (when I was ten years old and I learnt how to ride horses, and I was a professional horseback rider and I used to steeplechase; let me show you a picture of myself riding a horse, come here, you want to see it?)

Q. Sure. So I've now seen a picture of you riding a horse.
A. Yeah. Now, when I was nineteen and a half years old, my brother got a job after he graduated college, my brother got a job in our business and he was a salesman, he was a salesman.

Q. Was he Michael?
A. Yeah. He was a salesman. Well I was the production man, I never would go into the showroom, I never had the nerve to go into a showroom, see, so, he was the salesman and I was the, I was the production man and he was the salesman and we went into business under the name of Pomerantz Brothers.

Q. Wait, excuse me just a moment, you had, at that point,
you had left the Kaufman's, you had....
A. Yeah.
Q. ...Left that job. Okay.
A. And they went out of business, they retired.
Q. I see, okay.
A. They were very, extremely wealthy and they moved to California. And my son had a Bar Mitzvah and I brought him to California to meet Mr. and Mrs. Kaufman.
Q. Your son John?
A. Yeah.
Q. So they lived a long, they lived a pretty long time....
A. After, they lived in Los Angeles.
Q. ...After they retired?
A. Yeah. They lived there all the time.
Q. I see, yes, alright. I didn't mean to interrupt you about Mike, you went into business with Michael as the Pomerantz Brothers?
A. Yeah.
Q. Right, okay. How old were you then?
A. Huh?
Q. How old were you then?
A. I was nineteen and a half. So my brother Mike used to bring in the things, you know, the garments that he wanted me to knock off and I used to make the patterns and make them.
Now every once in a while, I made up my own design, my own style, that I thought was good and I’d show it to my brother and he always wanted to be the big shot, you know? So I showed it to my brother and he said, you like it? I says, yes, it’s terrific, you’ll sell a lot of them. He said, well you go out and sell them; I don’t think it’s anything. And I must have made fifteen samples by this time, he kept on saying, you sell it. Now at that time, there were, there were two or three and a fourth different furs, squirrel was what they call mink today. A squirrel (there was no mink at that time that I, that I remember) but squirrel was the big expensive fur and, and beaver was the expensive fur. See we used to have dogs and cats for our coats; you know, and that’s the furs we had.

Q. What do you mean you used to, you used to have fur, you used to have dogs and cats?

A. Yeah. Dog furs. Used to make furs out of the dogs.

Q. Really.

A. And it used to be....

Q. Did you make wool coats with these as trims?

A. Wool coats with shawl collars, shawl collars and cuffs, every coat had a shawl collar and cuffs. One time I happened to go around looking for furs that I can buy a little
cheaper, you know, different kinds and there was a building on Thirteenth Street and Sixth Avenue that was an apartment house and in every apartment the mother, the father, the children worked on the machines; they cut and they made furs, you know? I went there to see if I can buy some, some cheaper dogs or cats, I forgot what they..., they didn't call them dogs or cats, they call it mouffron, they call it....

Q. How do you spell mouffron, do you know?

A. M O U F F R O N. I think that's how you spell it. And they called the cats, I forget what the hell they called it, they didn't call it cats. To make a long story short, I walk into a place that's making baby carriage covers out of squirrel paws, you know, so I says, Jesus, this is squirrel and the price it was I can use 'em so I take my patterns and I tell him to make me patterns. Now, I stayed there until they cut it and they put wadding underneath it, to make, bring the fur up, and I bring them back and I take six coats and I put them on the coats. Now I said to my brother, you can go out and sell these coats for $16.75 and we'll make a lot of money on them. He says, I should go out and sell this here? I wouldn't sell it if you want me to sell it for $10.75. What the hell do you, what do you think I..., what are you telling me to do? Are you
a designer? And, I get bawled out. He says, you like it, you go and sell it. So I says, okay you son-of-a-bitch, I'm going to go out and sell it. Well I give you my word of honor, I got so drunk that night....

Q. Before?
A. ...Yeah. That I have to go and sell it, I'm going to go out and sell them. And we had a brother that was a C.P.A. and he worked for the Board of Health so I asked him to come up. He came up in the evening when he got through, he got through early, four o'clock or something, and I'm showing him what he has to do, we had a factory, what to give the factory, what to give the factory and this and that. So, he did it and I went out and I says, I'll call you up early every half hour or so and tell you, ask you what you did and tell you what else to do. So I go up to look at the New York Times and I get the Arrival of Buyers and I see every..., everybody that's in town came, was in Bennett Levis, 1225 Broadway, you know where it is? It's between Thirtieth, on Thirtieth Street and Sixth Avenue and Broadway.

Q. Do you know how to spell that, the name that you told me?
A. Bennett Levis, L E V I S.

Q. Okay.
A. That was the resident buying office. And I get off the elevator
and I figured if I'm going to sit there, stand and wait for my turn, I'll be... I wouldn't get, I'll have to come back the next day, you know, because there were so many salesmen there, the lobby was full of salesmen. I had a reputation of having a fight with some tough guys that work for the unions, see, and I clipped a couple of them and they promised to kill me. But they never, they, when, when they notice that you're not afraid of them, they're afraid of you, see.

Q. But that was later on?
A. Yeah. No, that was when, that was when I was in business with my brother.

Q. Oh, really?
A. Yeah. You see, I'll tell you how I became a tough guy. It's not in my business, but I became a tough guy--we used to work for three months in the coat business--three months we worked from eleven to seven, seven in the morning until eleven o'clock at night and for three months we did nothing. We did nothing. The only one that worked is to make, the guys making new styles, you know what I mean?

Q. Yeah.
A. Patternmakers and the production, but it didn't mean anything because you had to wait for the goods, you had
to order the goods three months in advance and we didn't
do anything, you see. So, why am I telling you that, I
was just trying to....

Q. You were, what we were, talking about the resident buy-
ing office....

A. Oh, yeah. So, so, oh, no, let me tell you this is a, as
long as I'm going to tell you about my life.... Let's go
back to when I was fifteen and a half years old. I went
to see what they were showing in Abraham and Strauss and as
I walk in; this is when President Wilson called for volun-
teers. The first day he called for volunteers and they
said, if you got cold feet join the Army, we'll give you
woolen socks, you know? So I decided I'm going to join
the Army. I was fifteen and a half or sixteen, I don't
remember. So I forged my age to eighteen and I forged
my father's signature and I join the Army. Now....

Q. You were still working for the Kaufmans then?

A. Yeah, I was working for the Kaufmans but I figured I
wasn't going to work anymore because when I joined the
Army, they were looking for someone else to take the
job and they got someone else. Now, I went to the
Army, they, after I got my father's signature and a
Notary Public signed it, you know, I went there and
they sent me to Bedford Avenue Armory and they gave
me a uniform and I stayed there for about a week and they taught you how to take the gun apart and put the gun together and they taught you how to put the bullets in and it was just a lot of waste of time standing there. Now they send me to Cold Springs New York where they were guarding the Acqueduct so Germans shouldn't put poison in the water that comes to New York, see, and there was a lot of soldiers up there. So I get up there and they put me on a dog watch, the twelve to four, twelve midnight to four in the morning, it's four on and eight off, see. So I'm going to go on duty and they said to me, you better be careful. There was a lot of soldiers being killed, eaten up by these animals up there, these wild, wild dogs and wild this and wild that, you know? And he says, a gang of people and they had twelve on their, on their leggings, at that time in the First World War, we had legging, you know, we wore leggings. So I go up on guard duty and I want to tell you something, there was never a more nervous wreck than I was because I heard noises and I want to shoot and I don't know how to, how to shoot the gun, you know? And I'm a nervous wreck. When I come down they says, well what happened, you're still alive, you're lucky, you know. The dirty dozen. There was more than twelve but they, these were
the tough guys. I was the only Jew in my regiment, in my company, see, so when I come, we lived in tents, eight in a tent, see. So I get into the, get into my tent and I get undressed when the dirty dozen get a hold of me and they throw me into the latrine. Do you know what a latrine is?

Q. Yes I do.

A. They throw me into the latrine, the latrine is over ten foot deep and I couldn't get up and it took me a long time to get up. Now, I get up and instead of me going to the water stream to wash, I didn't want them to see me because they were around and I sneaked into my tent so when I sneaked into my tent they said to me, get out of here you stink, you all stink, come on get out--the fellas that are living there--you know, sleeping there with me and they start to make noise so the dirty dozen heard it and they grabbed a hold of me and they took me to the waterfalls and at that time we didn't have automobile trucks we had four horses or six horses or eight horses pulling a truck, you know? So they had wire brushes for the horses so they take me to the water stream and they, they, they wash me with the wire brushes, I wind up in the hospital.

Q. Uhm, I'll bet.
A. So my brother, my brother Joe, comes to visit me when he found out I was in the hospital and he says, I'm going to get you out of the Army. I says, no you're not; if you get me out I'll go to another city and I'll, I'll join it again, I'll join again, I'll forge my ad..., I'll forge my name and a different name. I'm a citizen and I want to be a, I'm an American and I want to be an American, something like that, I'm not quoting the exact words, I can't remember. But now we're breaking up camp, see, and when they broke up camp at that time--I got back into the Army--about a day after I'm out of the hospital they're breaking up. So they put up, they put up a ring, see, like a prizefighter's ring and they don't want you to shoot your, your soldiers, you know what I mean, each other? So if I got something against you, I call you into the ring and you got to come in and we fight and if the count of five, if you're down, count to five, the fight is over, see. So all of sudden I meet a Sergeant Fisher, I didn't meet him; he came looking for me. He was on an outpost, he was a Jew but he was, if you ever saw an Army picture with the tough Sargeants, they all copied him because he was a career Sargeant, see. He was in the Army a long time. And he says to me, do you know the guys that did it? I says, yeah they wear twelve on their leggins.
He said, well I want you to call them into the ring.
I said, I will not. What do you think, I'm going to get killed? They'll kill me. He says, what I'm telling you, I want you to call them into the ring. Now, if you don't call them into the ring, I'm going to go in the ring and call you and I wouldn't let you fall. You know, because if you fall on the count of five, the fight is over.

Q. It's finished, yeah.

A. He says, I'll..., you won't have a belly left because I'll hold you up and he was a tall guy too, you know, and a powerful guy; and he was really the toughest Sergeant you--I used to see these sergeants and always thought of him. So I figured well I'll go, call a guy in, I'll get hit and I'll fall, you know? So instead, I call a guy in and he comes in and I clip him and he falls. So the Sergeant was right, so I call another guy in, so he falls, I knocked eight Sergeant..., eight guys out and the other ones disappeared, see, there are no more with the twelve. So when I walked out of there out of the ring, everyone comes over to shake my hand, they all like me now, before they hated me, now they like me, you know. And the Sergeant says, I told you that when, guys are tough when they got the gang but
when they're alone, they're not tough, they're sissies. And he taught me that, see. Now we get transferred, we're moving, when they broke up camp to Yonkers..., oh if you look up the history there, Yonkers, and in Yonkers they have a park, I forget the name of the park and they had soldiers from all over the United States that they sent to Europe, see. And you got to do guard duty. After I was in the fight, I didn't get guard duty once, I used to say, hey do my guard duty, everybody in my company, every soldier, was afraid of me, I was the toughest guy in my company. I used to say, hey do my guard duty. Okay, Pomerantz. And they'd do my guard duty. I never did duty after that....

Q. You really learned a lesson that you used in your later life, didn't you?
A. ...You see, so I was a, a tough guy.
Q. Yeah, right.
A. So....
Q. Back to the resident buying office....
A. No, I'll, if this will....
Q. No, oh I'm sorry, yes.
A. So, we, we break up camp and we go to, to this place in Yonkers and I just can't remember the name, and then, after you're there they send you to Pier 4, Hoboken,
New Jersey and you go on, you go on a boat to Europe.
I'm at Pier 4, Hoboken, New Jersey--Fred Pomerantz four steps forward--I say, what the hell did I do now? Maybe they're wise to me because I didn't, I didn't do guard duty, the other guys doing the guard duty. So he says, 'Thut, forward march, and I forward march into the guy sitting at the desk--Front Pomerantz: Yeah. And he gives me my, my discharge papers, dishonorable discharge.
Q. Dishonorable? Why?
A. Because I forged, you see my brother, when he came up to see me, his boss was very friendly with Senator Calder at that time, a Senator and they got me out of the Army.
Q. Because you were too young too, I suppose.
A. Yeah. So I went back to work for N. R. Kaufman, you know?
Then everyone knew that the unions had tough guys and if you paid them, you didn't have to become a union guy.
If you didn't pay them, you had to become a union guy, you know. So everybody knew that they came up to see me and I kicked hell out of them.
Q. Was this when you were in business with your brother?
A. Yeah. And this is, here, look. I'll show you. I got stabbed by the union.
Q. You were stabbed by somebody from the union?
A. From... you know, the tough...
Q. One of the, uh, huh, from, by one of the tough guys.
   Isn't that interesting.
A. That was Lepke, Curley, and Gurrah at that time.
Q. Lepke?
A. Lepke, Curley and Gurrah.
Q. Lepke, Curley and Gurrah, okay.
A. Well, now when I went up to the... (resident buying office),
   and I threw the garments over the rack....
Q. No, but you...
A. Yeah....
Q. ... And you knew you would be there for a whole day if you
   waited....
A. Yeah....
Q. ... So...?
A. So, I took the garments out of the bag, took the hangers
   off and I flung them over the partition because there
   were no, no, no, you..., I don't care what office you
   walked into, any lawyers office or the richest man's off-
   ice in the world, you saw a six foot partition and if
   it's a very wealthy office, they had mahogany walls with
   glass, you know, and with drapes, you know? That was
   the nice, that was the nice ones; otherwise, I'll show
   you, I'll show you downstairs, we still got the old ones
downstairs. So....

Q. They were just six feet high but had nothing on top?
A. Yeah. I'll show you what it had, we got them downstairs. So I flung them over the partition and I hollered....

Q. All six coats?
A. Yeah. Sixteen seventy-five see if you can beat it.

And this buyer comes out--who's the wise guy--I said, me. He says, are you Freddie Pomerantz? I says, yes and he ran from me, he was afraid of me, you know, he was afraid of me. Then another guy comes in and he says....

Q. Was he a buyer or, or a customer?
A. He was the buyer.
Q. He was the buyer.
A. Now another man comes out and says, who's the gentleman that did that? I says, I did, I figured this is another fight. So he calls me in and he says, I can't remember the words he said but he didn't say I like your nerve but that's what he meant, you know? I like a man that's a go-getter, you know, and he says, I remember the end, you're a go-getter but I don't forget the words that he used, they were too high class for me to remember. So he bought every style I showed him and he had about thirty
stores. Now if he bought, everybody else in the office bought and I figured by this time my brother Mike got the telephone call that I, that I threw the garments over and everything I did, you know? But every time..., every stop I made, I did the same thing. So I called my brother up every half hour to tell him what to do, so he said, did you get an order? I said, no, not yet. He said, come on back. Freddie, you're the best production man, your brother is the..., Mike is the best salesman, you're doing well in business, what the hell do you want to be a salesman for?

Q. This is your brother the accountant?
A. Yeah.

Q. What was his name?
A. Sol.

Q. Sol.
A. So, to make a long story short, I says, I'm, I'm not coming back until I get an order and every place I went to..., see, I went to one, one place and they thought that I'm a tough guy, that I'm buying stolen furs, so he says, how about beavers? I said, I'll have them next week, see? I sold more garments that day than my brother did in four weeks.

Q. But you said a minute ago that you didn't have any orders,
but you did have orders?

A. Yeah, I was getting orders from everybody. I told my brother Sol that I didn't have an order.

Q. Okay, alright.

A. See? So...

Q. But you really did?

A. ...I did have the orders but I didn't want him to tell Mike. See? So when we, I came back at six o'clock, at that time we didn't have a showroom like you got today, the only ones that had showrooms were jobbers on Thirty-Fourth Street, we used to do business with them, they had big showrooms, but outside of that there was all office work, you know, you sold them in the office.

Q. I see.

A. So we got all the orders in the bottom of the bag, you know, that I took and the boy hangs the bag up, we had we had one table right near the shipping department for a buyer to come in--the New York buyers used to come... none of the out of, the out of town buyers, no...

Q. You mean the New York store buyers and...

A. No, not New York store buyers but the out of town, the New York office buyers.

Q. Office buyers.

A. You see? To make a long story short, I sit down with my
brother and he's bawling me out, he says, why do you... ,
when I tell you it's no good, you'll remember it's no
good from now on, you'll leave me alone and stop making
styles that are no good and he's bawling me out and I'm
taking it. And then I call the boy over and I says, why
do you leave the..., those, those coats in the bag for,
you got six, six bags, six coats in a tight bag, I'll
have to press them tomorrow if you don't hang them up,
hang them up. So he hangs them up, I says, what do you
got in there, dirt? What are you crazy? And I says,
empty that there, what do you..., I want to see what you
got in there. So he empties all the orders, I thought
my brother would faint.

Q. I wouldn't blame him if he did.

A. I thought he would faint. And I was just talking to my
sister, she was here before you came in and I, I take
responsibility for my brothers death.

Q. I didn't know you had a sister, this is your own sister
or a sister-in-law?

A. My sister.

Q. You had a sister as well as your brothers.

A. Yeah. We had four sisters and four brothers, we were
eight..., we were ten in the family but two I never met,
they died before I was born, so there are eight.
Q. So your sister was here....

A. Yeah, the one that you can't get a hold of, didn't you?

Q. I didn't no, no I don't thi

A. So, to make a long story short, I started to go out with my brother. My brother used to come home every night and he'd be going out with a girl, so this went on for a while, we had parties every night and we used to meet down about six o'clock in the morning until eleven o'clock at night, you know. I said, why the hell are you running out at six o'clock? So one day he comes in and he says to me, "You're sick and tired of you telling me what I'm doing, and what I do, I'll tell you what, I'll buy you out and we'll be the same partner, but I'll be the one who gets the money that we got, fifty percent, but you'll be the same partner, but you'll do what you're doing and I'll do what I'm doing and, and you won't, you won't, when I tell, when I say something it's going to be law, you're not going to scream at me and holler at me the way you did. So he says, I want the, I'm giving you until tonight to think it over. So that's when I took the picture, the one on the horse, I went, we went to Lakewood at that time, everybody used to go to Lakewood and, and I'm going to Lakewood and he says to me, I told you what time I want
(FRED POMERANTZ) 

you to give me the notice of what you're going to do.  
So I take the keys out of my pocket and I fling it at 
him and I hit him in the face with it and I says, it's 
your place I don't, I'm not coming back anymore. 

Q. So that was the end of Pomerantz Brothers? 
A. Yeah.  

Q. How old were you then? 
A. I was about twenty-one, twenty-two. 

Q. So then what did you do? 
A. Then when three months went by, I got sixty-five thousand 
dollars from him. I had an account in Gimbel Brothers, 
Gimbel Brothers had a bank on the mezzanine floor, I used 
to go in there because it takes, it took longer for a check 
to clear, see. So now it's time for me to go into business 
and I'm nineteen dollars overdrawn. So there was a new 
building, there was an old building on Seventh Avenue, 
469 Seventh Avenue, it's on Thirty-Sixth Street, Thirty-
Seventh Street and Seventh Avenue. It used to be a furni-
ture building, see, only furniture people, they all moved 
out and they moved to Park Avenue and to Madison Avenue. 
So this guy owned the building and he's trying to make a 
ready-to-wear building out of it. So I go up and I rent 
a floor, so he asked me out for the check. I says, I can't 
give you a check because I'm having a problem in Washington,
they won't okay my name, I'm, as soon as they okay the name, I'll give you a check. I'll make a deposit in the Company and I'll give you a check. So he says, well give me a personal check. I said, I won't give you a personal check, why should I give you a personal check? I want to give you the company's check. So he says, okay. They, he needed tenants and he gave me February 1st to live, rent free for close to a year.

Q. My goodness, that was a pretty good deal.

A. Now I have to build racks, so the guys want money and I say, when Washington okays my, my name, I'll give you a check. I used that excuse with everybody and I got away with it. So I had people. So, I says, you want to work for me, you got to work for me, I'll give you, I hold back four weeks salary. Because there was a lot of people out of work at that time, was the....

Q. This is what, nineteen twenty or some....

A. ...Depression. In the twenties, early, that's when the bank of the....

Q. Yes, right.

A. ...United States went broke. So he says to me... I said, nobody can work for me unless they give me four weeks, notice, four weeks, I got to hold back four weeks pay. So I get an order, so I go out to buy piece goods. So they
all say, how's about your statement? I says, as soon as I get the okay from Washington, you'll get the statement, you know how much money I got out. That's what I'm going, I going to show. Okay, they all took my word for it, they all knew me, because I used to buy the piece goods, see, so....

Q. What was the name of that business? Did you have a name for it?

A. It's was Fred Pomerantz. Very tough name to have.....

Q. Just Fred Pomerantz, Inc.?

A. Yeah, yeah. Just a tough name to have incorporated, you know, I couldn't get it okayed in Washington.

Q. There might be another Fred Pomerantz in the world.

A. So to make the long story short, I got an order from a jobber on Thirty-Fourth Street, I shipped him the goods and at that time if you wanted cash, one percent cash. So one percent, I got the cash, I deposit the, the money in the bank, had about seventy-two thousand dollars that I got, I don't remember exactly, seventy-two or seventy. And I deposit it in the Gimbels bank, now I go to all the banks and I want them, I'm not, I don't want to come around to borrow money, when I need it, you're liable to say you don't want to give it to me, you want my account you got to give it to me now. I want to borrow seventy-
five thousand and I'll give you the, I'll give you the interest. I'll leave the balance there. So a half a dozen banks turned me down but one bank didn't. So that day I got back and I made out the checks to everybody that worked for me, for the factory, for the racks, for the shipping clerk, everybody got paid see, because I had, I had a balance in the bank.

Q. Had you shipped any clothes at this point?
A. Yeah, at that time I shipped one order.

Q. One order, just one order.
A. So I had the money.

Q. With your one percent cash?
A. Yeah, I had the money.

Q. Right.
A. So I made a, I made a lot of money that, that first season.

Now my brother used to knock me off and make them for cheaper, you know?

Q. But now, let me make sure I understand something, were you making dresses by now?
A. No, coats.

Q. You were still making coats?
A. Making coats.

Q. So that was why, when you said your brother would knock you off for cheaper....

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A. Yeah....

Q. ...He was knocking off coats.
A. He was making coats.
Q. Yeah, right, yeah.
A. There were no dresses at that time.
Q. I see. Okay.
A. You see, you know what they wore? They wore skirts and blouses....
Q. Yeah, shirts and, yeah....
A. ...And evening dresses and wedding gowns. There were no dresses and I didn't know of any dress houses. Now about nineteen twenty-six there was a, on the radio, there was a check and double check and I got prints check and double check....

End of Tape 1, Side 1
...On radio.

Q. And that was, that became a print.

A. No, well, we made a print and we called it check and double check.

Q. I see, oh, okay, alright.

A. See? So I went out, I decided to try the dress business during the slow season, for the three months that we had a slow season. So I decided to be a big shot and I hired a production man, see, this man worked out of town and he was supposed to have a terrific reputation. So I hired him and wherever I went with the dresses, I sold them, every place I went to they bought them, see. To make a long story short, I start to ship and I'll never forget I ship to Montgomery, Montgomery Ward, the first order. So they call me up, the dresses don't fit. I put them on a figure and they don't fit. I put them on girls, they don't fit. So I have to take them back. So now I get back there's another call, dresses don't fit. So I tell them to return them. I go up to the factories, which at that time were contractors, and I took in half an inch and I let out half an inch and I made the dress fit because I was a patternmaker, you know, and I started to ship.

Q. What happened to the production man that you'd had?

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A. He went to the hospital when I came back.

Q. Oh really. (laughter).

A. I nearly killed him.

Q. Really.

A. Nearly killed him. They took him to the hospital, if I'm telling you an untruth, I hope I never live a happy day the rest of my life, I shouldn't have one good day, including my family. That....

Q. How much were the dresses in those day..., I mean that you got back, what was their price?

A. Oh, they were very expensive. Four seventy-five.

Q. Uh, huh. But if you have enough four seventy-five dresses it could be a lot of money?

A. Yeah. But everybody else was getting four sixty-five less ten. I was getting four seventy-five less eight, see.

To make a long story short, I'm ready to go out of the dress business because I got, I started to get telephone calls and I figured they want to return them, I'll go broke, you know, I wouldn't accept no more calls. So, to make a long story short, I go to Brooklyn, Martin's, and there's a Jew boy with a Jewish accent, he was the buyer, so he knew me very well, so I go there and I says I want you to, I'm trying to sell my dresses that I have. I'm selling out my dresses, I'm going back in the coat
(FRED POMERANTZ) Tape 1, Side 2

business. He says, Freddie, you're going back in the coat business? You're the best dress man, you got nothing but clickers, why do you want to go back in the dress business, you got clickers. You're crazy? He says, send me a hundred of a number.

Q. A clicker is a Ford I take it?
A. No, a clicker is a good number.

Q. A Ford?
A. A good number, not a Ford.

Q. A Ford is a....
A. A Ford is a good style, a, a.... No this was, at that time a clicker was a good number.

Q. Okay.
A. So, I went and I start to call all the people back that I been calling me....

Q. That you thought wanted to return dresses?
A. ...And they, because I fixed all the dresses, you know. I only shipped them to two or three people but I figured I didn't do gre..., good enough job on dresses because I was a patternmaker for coats maybe I, I did it wrong or maybe I did it right. To make a long story short, everybody I called gave me a reorder and if not for that guy in Brooklyn, I would have been back in the coat business probably broke.

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Q. Oh, is that funny, that's marvelous. So you stayed with that business? With Fred Pomerantz, Inc.? Un..., but, until when?
A. Huh?
Q. When did you stop that business?
A. Now that business went on and a friend of mine lost his job. He used to just be a production man in the dress business. So we call the company, I gave him a piece of the company, cause I was working too hard. I wanted to be a, you know, a big shot. So I, I could go to Florida and live, you know? So, his name was Silverkly. So I was going to PomSilver, didn't sound right, so I called it SilverPom.
Q. Silver - Pom?
A. Pom.
Q. That became the name of the company? P O M M, is that how you spelled it, no?
A. S I L V E R - P O M.
Q. P O M, okay, okay, alright. And you stayed with that business for, until you were thirty-one, if I remember the....
A. We made a lot of money. Made an awful lot of money. Now, there were two shirtmakers in the thirties, George Piden, and Arrow. George Piden went broke.
(FRED POMERANTZ)  

Tape 1, Side 2

Q. I'm sorry, do you know how to spell Pieyed?

A. P I D, George Pieyed (Phonetically Mr. Pomerantz was saying Pieyed). I D E N (I believe Mr. Pomerantz's spelling was Piden).

Q. Okay, sorry. Okay.

A. And they went broke and there was a factory for sale. I went up to look at this factory, I'll tell you in a little while where it was, I forgot and, I want to tell you something, it had a hospital in it, a regular hospital where a, where a doctor can come in and operate on you. It was two square blocks long, you know.

Q. Yeah, uh, huh, so it was big, it was really big....

A. A big factory....

Q. I was just looking to see if in my notes, I don't think I know anything about this story, I don't think there is anything in my notes about it.

A. What story?

Q. Well, I, I took notes on the Clothes magazine story and so on, but I don't know anything about this particular....

A. Well I'm giving you the beginning 'till the end, everything....

Q. Oh sure, I know, I was just trying to help you out, I thought maybe the name of the plant was in here but it isn't. That's not Lincoln's town? There was a place something like that.
A. [Hear Mr. Pomerantz talking (on intercom?) "Call the factory and see if Irving Shenendorf is there--Mechanics...."]

Q. Mechanicsville.

A. [...Oh never mind" hangs up phone.]

Q. Mechanicsville, I just found it here, too. Okay.

A. Mechanicsville, New York.

Q. Right, right, right I just found it.

A. That was in nineteen thirty-three or thirty-four.

Q. And according to my notes, it was unionized in thirty-two, no?

A. No, wait I'll tell you.

Q. No, no?

A. Never unionized. So I wanted it, I wanted it to become union because at that time I went, I was union. And, but there was a Joint Board in New York, the out of town people, they had factories out of town, not New York people but let's say some company that lives, that's got their office and shipping department and their factories out of New York, they had a different labor set up. They were, they didn't belong to the Joint Board; they belonged to the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

Q. Right.

A. I belonged to the Joint Board. Do you understand?

Q. Uh, huh.
A. So I says, I don't mind belonging to the Joint Board with the New York factories but what the hell do I have to ship my dresses to Mechanicsville, New York, all the way up there, pay express charges to come back here, ship from here, I had to be up there, I had to be here; I says, I wouldn't become Joint Board, you want to make me an International Dress? Okay. Well, he says, if you don't join the Joint, the Union, you'll have a strike. I says, the day I'll have a strike is the day I'll be out of the dress business. I'll come in a Friday, we used to have breakfast, at a, at Schrafft's here, I'll come on a breakfast, there was a bunch of guys, and I see a bunch of pickets on Silver-Pom. I go upstairs and I fire everybody, I had a lot of money, we were worth a lot of money, and I fire everybody. In addition, we had a small business, a half size business we made a lot of money in, showed a big profit all the time because there weren't very many people in the half size business, there was a racket. So I gave that to my brother, he paid me off, the brother Mike that didn't, that, you know, that we were fighting all the time.

Q. Uh, huh, yeah, right.

A. So I moved to California.

Q. Did you have a lot of money with you when you went?

A. Yeah, I was worth about three million dollars. I moved to
California and I want to go in the real estate business, the guy talks me out. I was very, I knew a lot of people in California because we used to have a steak house there, a whole floor full of our dresses, the California people didn't come to New York so they used to go into the Stock House, buy the dresses and pay fifteen cents more for the freight, do you know what I mean.

Q. Uh, huh, uh, huh.
A. We're making four seventy-five they paid us four ninety. So I couldn't open a dress factory because if I opened a dress factory there the union would make me union even though nine-tenths of the people weren't union, I'd have to become a union, because I was a union, I had a union agreement.

Q. Yeah.
A. You know, I didn't finish up my contract. To make a long story short, every business I want to go into they talk me out of, I had a lot of friends.

Q. Didn't I read somewhere that George Raft was a friend and that he got you into a couple of movies?
A. Yeah, there's, there's his picture up there.
A. Yeah, I was friendly with all the moving picture guys....
Q. Did you really make any movies?
A. ...With Cary Grant. I was in the movie and I brought a hundred people up to see it at the Paramount at that time and they cut it out (laughter)....

Q. Oh, no (laughter).

A. ...My part was cut out, I'll never forget that, I brought a hundred people to the movie....

Q. And you were the face on the cutting room floor as they used to say, yeah.

A. So....

Q. But you also went into the retail business?

A. Huh?

Q. You also went into retail?

A. So then someone says to me, why don't you go into the retail business? I said, well I got to do something, I'll go in the ret... I'll, I'll come back and speak to my partner.

Q. How old were you then? Because you were still young, very young?

A. I was thirty, thirty-three. So I spoke to my partner, he had a lot of money because he saved every nickel, I was always a big spender. And I wanted him to hire, I had told him, I'm going to go into the retail business, you want to go in with me? He says, yes, I think it's a good idea. So I said, I want you to hire this man and
this man, these two guys, they know the retail business
and we'll be successful. I talked to them and I'm hir...
I hired them, I'm ready to, you know, but I said, I want
you to. I'm not going to be here so I want you to be
with Silverkly. Silverkly wasn't in the day I hired them
and I had a date to go to a party in California, so I went
to California. And I told Silverkly to hire these two
guys and he says he's going to. I says, well don't hire
them now, wait until I get some stores, we don't need
them. So I go and I open up, I get there, I rent a store
got a hundred percent location in Los Angeles, I opened one
in San Francisco, I opened one in Seattle, I had, we had
about twelve stores. Instead of him hiring these two
people that I begged him to hire, he gets another retailer
with four stores and we do the buying for him free, you
know, we give him an office free, he's merchandising our,
our stores and merchandising his so he gets free buying,
service and free delivery service and free everything, you
know? I ball the hell out of my partner, he says, the
guys a successful dress man what the hell are you worry-
ing about? I'm responsible. Well, he either had too many
dresses or too little dresses. We, if a woman came in for
a, for a dress we either had more tens and no eights, if
a woman came in for a pair of hose we had--I want to tell
you we had--we were loaded with hose but we didn't have the sizes. And I was offered to sell the store, this is very interesting, Grayson's wanted to buy my stores because the locations and the stores were beautiful, they were beautiful, I did it and I didn't pay for one, the landlord paid for it, see. You know, it was a little after the depression and the landlords paid for every store that I fixed up.

Q. Oh, you mean they paid to decorate and....
A. Yeah. I paid for it in rent, but they laid out the money. Well we went broke.

Q. You mean you lost money?
A. What?

Q. Did you lose all your money?
A. So now I'm selling the stores to Grayson's because we're not merchandising it right and we're doing a lousy job, we're losing a lot of money and, and I never believed in, in fortune tellers, and the guy is telling me a story that he just came from a fortune teller--this guy is terrific. I didn't tell him I was going. I'm going to bed that night I say, Jesus, I'm going to go over to see this guy in the morning. So I go over in the morning, the guy didn't speak a word of English--Jewish.

Q. This is the one who owned the, oh, this is....
A. No, this was a fortune teller.

Q. A for... oh, okay.

A. A real fortune teller, you know. So I walk in there and he calls me by name. He read your mind. I don't know what to think because I didn't tell the guy that told me that he was there that I was going to go there, you know what I mean? I didn't make no appointment, I just walked in.

Q. And he rec... and he knew your name?

A. He called me by my name, my Jewish name. And then, I sat down to talk to him and he says, you're thinking of selling your business, don't sell your business. Now he didn't know me because the fellow that told me the story never thought that I would go to him, he was telling me over lunch that, that he went to a guy that was a miracle man, you know, so I went to the guy, so I didn't sell the stores and we went broke.

Q. Oh, my God. Thanks to your fortune teller?

A. And you want me to tell you something? I came back to New York without a quarter. Now if I tell you without a quarter....

Q. And you went out there with three million?

A. With three million and I tell you without a quarter, without a quarter, I had to walk from Ninety-Fifth Street, I
rented an apartment on Ninety-Fourth Street, downtown. Now I get a job with a piece goods house for fifty thousand a year. The guy that I used to do business with died, I used to buy a lot of piece goods there and they had a lot of confidence in how I bought, made prints, you know?

Q. Do you remember the name of the firm?
A. No.
Q. No.
A. They're out of business maybe fifty years, forty years. So my brother says to me, you know, the brother that was the accountant, he was in a, he left the city, he went, went to be an accountant....

Q. Lou? Was that his name?
A. Sol.
Q. Sol, Sol, excuse me.
A. And he had money, he saved every nickel, you know, he didn't spend a penny unless it was very necessary and my brother Joe had the same proposition that I had with my boss. He was in the hat business and his boss broke his leg, had a b... , had a horse and carriage at that time and the boss got into an auto... , into an accident with a street car, you know the street cars used to have horses, so he pulled a Freddie Pomerantz. He said, you're
going to hire salesmen to go on the road you don't know if they're going to be good or bad and then you'll have to have, they'll take your business away after you, after you get healthy, why don't you let me go and make the trip? So the boss let him go and make the trip, so he, this is very funny, he pulled out a Pomerantz, he says, let's say he went to Philadelphia, and he says, he writes himself a letter before he leaves, I don't want you to sell Gimbel Brothers, I want you to sell Strawbridge and Clothier, confine it to Strawbridge and Clothier. Now they sold hats with the store name on it, their name wasn't in there at all. So he shows the letter to the buyer in Strawbridge and Clothier, I'm just mentioning the name I don't know that, the name, and they say this, you're not going to sell Gimbel Bros. or the other stores? Nope, I want to show my boss that I'm good, that I can sell you and you'll make me a happy man so I'm not, I can't talk what he said, but he sold every store in town because when he went to Gimbel's, he showed them, don't sell Strawbridge sell Gimbel's, when he went to Wanamaker's, don't sell Strawbridge, don't sell Gimbel's, sell Wanamaker's. He used my gag, you know? And he became a very terrific salesman, so Stetson wanted to hire him. When the boss found out that Stetson wanted to hire
him, he gave him a piece of business, you know, made him a partner.

Q. Sure.

A. And he became a full-fledged partner and he wound up owning the business so he was a rich guy when I came back from California. So he says to me, what the hell do you want to go and work for somebody else? How much money do you need to go into business? I says, about thirty thousand. He said, how can you go into business with thirty thousand. I says, I'll tell you what, you loan me thirty thousand and I'll pay it back to you in three months. So two brothers were there. My brother Sol, who was the accountant, and he was a public accountant now, he didn't work for the Board of Health, he was making plenty of money too. So he says, alright, we'll loan you the thirty thousand. I said, but you can't take the money from my brother Mike, you know the one that was my original partner.

Q. Right, yes, in the coat business.

A. So, alright, we'll loan you the thirty thousand. So they give me a check and I open an account thirty thousand and I go into business. Now, the whole market is dresses at four sixty-five less ten and my price was four seventy-
five less eight. So he wasn't, he had my little business that I told you about the half size business....

Q. Right, right.

A. So he came down to me, he says, what are you crazy? The whole market is seven four sixty-five less ten, who the hell are you that you're going to get four seventy-five less eight? I says, look, I'm running this business and I'm going to get four seventy-five less eight. The people that come up to talk to you are not going to buy if I give it to them for four sixty-five less ten, so I'm not interested. So, alright. About three days later he comes up to me and says, look, I'm telling you you should be four sixty-five less ten. I says, where do you come to tell me I should be four sixty..., I'm running this business, you're not, you don't have no money in here. He says, yes I have. I says, you got money in it? I says, okay, I'm closing this business up today and I'm going to make sure that you get your thirty thousand back. I call my two brothers up and I says, I'm closing the business up, there may be a little loss, but I'll pay it off.

Q. But you didn't want Mike in there at all?

A. I didn't want Mike in there. So they said, no you won't and they give me a check and they said, now you can go and
pay him off. He insisted on putting in the ten thousand dollars when he heard. So I paid my brother Mike off and he never came to me. I was the only firm in New York that sold at four seventy-five less eight.

Q. What was the name of this firm?
A. This, Pome, Pome-Dress.

A. Pome-Dress. No, Pommette.

Q. Pommette. Yes, because I thought....
A. Pome-Dress was the half-size dress that I sold, that I gave to my brother....

Q. Right.
A. Pommette.

Q. Pommette, yeah. And you got away with your four-seventy-five less eight?
A. Yeah. Now, we're doing very good and I get a crazy idea that I know I can't take care of. I wanted to open up a firm called Leslie Fay but I wanted to open up a firm that will have fashion, the stores will have to make fashion shows, the stores will have to advertise once a year in a magazine....

Q. Once a year?
A. Every store, once a year. In, in Glamour, Vogue or Made-moiselle and another paper at that time, another magazine,
I forget, four magazines.

Q. Harper's?

A. No, Harper's was too high priced and Vouge was too high priced.

Q. Yeah, right. Glamour, Mademoiselle, Charm, maybe? Charm?

A. Yeah, Charm.

Q. Charm, okay.

A. So I told them, I confined it to them and they had to have fashion shows and they had to have this and they had to have that.

Q. And did you give them exclusivity in their cities?

A. Huh?

Q. Did you give them exclusives in their cities?

A. Yeah, Leslie Fay was a....

Q. That's all, fine, fine, yeah....

A. ...Confined line. One in a city.

Q. So, but you really did one in a city? Not like your brother where you sold one by saying it was...

A. No, we sold one in a city, nobody else can buy.

Q. Only one in a city, right, yeah.

A. Now, I didn't think I can run this business and I had a lot of respect for a woman at the AMC and her name was, mama mia, I remember everything but names. This is a very funny thing we were....
Q. Well you remembered Mechanicsville before, Mechanicsville later, you know, it came back to you.

A. Dorothy, Dorothy, I think it was Dorothy Shaffer. (It sounds like Mr. Pomerantz is now talking into the telephone and saying, give me Hi J....) Oh, isn't that terrible, I'll tell you a funny story about it, this is the funniest story you ever heard. Dorothy Dean. (Sounds like Mr. Pomerantz hung up telephone). Dorothy Dean in the AMC, she was God at AMC, she nearly put me out of business three different times but she was really God, I'm serious.

Q. You mean she was very good?

A. She was terrific, she wasn't very good, she was terrific. But I want to tell you something, we loved each other, we really loved each other but she nearly put me out of business three different times.

Q. How?

A. Well, I'll give you an idea. We go shopping one time, she goes shopping with me....

Q. Excuse me, was she still with AMC or was she working with you now?

A. No, she was with AMC, she never worked for me.

Q. Okay.

A. See, we go shopping and we pick the dresses out and she
(FRED POMERANTZ)  
Tape 1, Side 2

says, look Freddie, if you have, pick, make these dresses  
the way they are, the way they are, I don't want you, I  
want, I don't want to recog..., be able.... I'll tell you  
how smart I was, I left this out, wait a minute. I had,  

had a column in Women's Wear, my picture with a crown on  
it, If I Was King of Garment Town, and I used to tell this  
guy every day something and he'd make a big story out of  
it and he'd have it in the, in the Women's Wear. One col-  
umn, If I Was King of Garment Town by Fred Pomerantz.  

Q. My God, really?  

A. With my picture, yeah. This is when I had this Leslie Fay.  
So to make a long story short, I didn't think I can handle  
Leslie Fay.  

Q. Well you were telling me about Dorothy Dean, you went  

shopping?  

A. Yeah, yeah, we went shopping and we picked out some dresses  
and she says to me, Freddie, I want these dresses to look  
that I can't tell any difference, you're going to make them  
so I can't tell any difference and then I'll have every  
store run a double ad, double spread ad. I make the dresses,  
I don't figure it, I don't do anything, I don't know how  
much money it's going to cost me and I make the dresses.  
She calls me up and she says, I'm coming up at eleven  
o'clock and I'm having my, having the lunch come up at  

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twelve o'clock, make sure that no, nobody will be in
the showroom so I can bring up the whole gang. She
brings up about fifty people and we show them the line
on models. Now she calls me into my office and she says,
I want them for three seventy-five. I says, Miss Dean
I'll make them for three seventy-five, I'll knock them
off but to make these at four seventy-five, I don't know
how much I'm going to lose, I don't know how much I'm go-
ing to lose. But I'll make them at three seventy-five
and I'll show you, I'll lose maybe a quarter a garment--
they'll probably cost me four dollars and I swear I'm
telling you the truth. She says, no, I want the garments
at three seventy-five. I says, I can't make them that
way, it's impossible. So she goes out and says, alright
let's go, everybody gets up and they leave and I'm stand-
ing there like a dope. And the next morning I get a can-
cellation for ten thousand dresses. I wasn't passed
through....

Q. From AMC?
A. Yeah, all the stores, they all cancelled, she was God in
AMC. So, she, the orders are cancelled and I can sue
them....

Q. Yes, I was going to say, how does she justify that?
A. ...But I, I didn't want to sue them because I figured
I'll make up with her fast, she'll take them in. So I send over the salesman to find out why we got the cancelation. One of the salesman that waited on the AMC. So he comes, so he comes back and he says, Miss Dean feels that she can never get a sale from you or off price from you, you're always four seventy-five and she wanted these dresses and as long as she couldn't get these dresses, she didn't want to do business with you. So now I could have sued them and I didn't sue them. Now, now when I didn't sell Dean, and when I didn't sell AMC, so the other stores find out right away that I'm not doing business with AMC-- if I'm doing business with AMC, it was a big thing, you know with the other, with the other offices.

Q. Sure.

A. They were always, respected AMC. So my business went to hell. You know? So, I call up friends of mine that were general merchandise men of AMC and I said, I want to send you four styles, fifty of each, if you don't reorder them, you don't pay for them. The only time you pay for them if you, if you reorder them.

Q. Oh my God.

A. So, they said, did you straighten yourself out with Miss Dean? I said, no and I'm never going to straighten myself out with Dean. He says to me, well we can't buy them. I
sends, look I'm going to tell, let the whole (world) know why we stopped doing business, how you respect the resources. I'm not going to put it (in) my, If I Was King of Garment Town, but I'm going to take a double spread ad in Women's Wear. I'm going to take a double spread ad in your paper in Detroit, this is J.L. Hudson, and he says to me, you're crazy enough to do it, you stupid bastard, he says, we don't want it on, we don't want it on consignment, on the cuff, we'll give you an order number, you'll ship it to us. I called everybody up and I bullied every customer. I didn't want to sell it to Bloomingdale's because I didn't want Miss Dean to see them, see. Now I knew if I shipped them I'll get a reorder, see, I knew I'd get reorders if I shipped them. To make a long story short, I told the boys, the salesmen, if I'm out of the show..., office, or out of the showroom, or out of the, or out of the, out of the department, I'm, I'm going to leave you know where I'm at all the time. If Dean comes, in, if you're waiting on customers, tell the customer you can't wait on them; I don't want her to see the dresses, see. I'll, I'll leave you know where I'm at. So we used to eat lunch at Lindy's. I get a tel..., everyone is reordering the dresses now she wants to see them. So she comes in the office and she wants to see the dresses and they said, we can't show it
to you. So they call me up at Lindy's and I come, I grab a cab and I come back and I get a hold of her, we were on the sixteenth floor, 501 Seventh Avenue, eighteenth floor, 501 Seventh Avenue. I get Dean and I take her this way, by the collar and by the, by the pants and she has to walk down eighteen flights.

Q. (Laughter) Oh God.

A. And when I get her in the street, I give her a kick in the pants, see, I give her a kick in the pants. Because, if it was anybody else they'd be out of business.

Q. Of course.

A. You know? So I get a, about an hour later I get a call from her boss, from the big boss, the President, she was like the Executive Vice President, and he says to me, I know you're too big a man to come and see me, so what time, when can I come to see you? I said, don't big shot me, anytime you want me to come over, I'll come over. You want me to come over now, I'll come over. So he says, yes, I want you to come over now. So I come over and as I said about the, the ceilings being low, I'm telling him the story, that she could have put me out of business with the cancellation that I accepted and she could have put me out of business without selling because the other offices don't buy because we didn't sell AMC....
All of a sudden I hear somebody crying, she's in, in his office. So I look inside and it's her, so I get a hold of her, put my arms around her and I kiss her and we make up. And I, I started to cry and then we make up, see. So this is the pay off of it, now, two years ago I'm in, I'm in Palm Beach and I meet her assistant, that used to be one of her assistants. And she says to me, you know Dorothy lost her husband. This is only two years ago, and I'm, the story I'm telling you is maybe thirty-five or forty years ago. She says to me, Dorothy Dean lost her husband, it would be a very good idea if you called her up. So I called her up and she says, 'who is this. I says, I'll tell you, I'm a guy that you loved and I loved you but we never went to bed together....

Q. You told me you weren't going to tell me about your sex life.
A. You hear? No.

Q. Oh that's cute.
A. Well, we never went to bed together. She says, Freddie Pomerantz. I'm probably the only one she didn't go to bed with. She was beautiful.

Q. And apparently very, very....
A. And, and the smartest person....

Q. ...Smart, yeah.

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A. ...I offered her a fifty percent deal in Leslie Fay and she says, I can run a dress department, I can't run....

Q. Yeah, right.

A. ....A wholesale department. I'll never forget this, I can verify this, if you want to listen to the telephone conversation, I'll call this woman up.

Q. Oh, I believe you, I believe you. Fantastic. You said there were two other Dorothy Dean stories?

A. Huh?

Q. You said there were two other Dorothy Dean stories? Were they the same kind of..., where she almost put you out of business?

A. Yeah. No, they were AMC, you know....

Q. Yeah, right.

A. AMC and Pomerantz....

Q. No, but when you started to tell me about it you said, this woman almost put me out of business three times.

A. Yeah, because the other offices....

Q. Ah, I see.

A. They, they had so much respect for AMC, that if you didn't sell AMC they all knew about it, you know?

Q. Sure, sure. Fascinating story.

A. You know what I had a policy in this business, that we
never took a buyer to lunch and we never, never did any-
thing with a buyer--the buyer came up here and bought.
I have the screwiest things about this business. When
I started Leslie Fay you had to buy fifteen styles and
you had to buy at least fifteen styles. I don't know
of any customer that bought fifteen styles and I'll show
you orders. Now, I got a son that's the President, and
he keeps on telling me all the time that the times have
changed, it's not like it used to be; Allied Stores don't
want to buy fifteen styles, you hear? And he's always
telling me whenever I tell him I like it, I don't want
you to do it this way, he says to me, Dad, it's not like
it used to be. I say, it's not like it used to be? You're
liable to lose a couple of customers but it will be worth-
while, you know what I mean? Because if you do one thing
for a customer once you got to do it for them all the
time.

Q. You mean allowances and taking merchandise back?

A. Yeah. Give them a pres..., give them an ad, do this and
do that. The only time we give them an ad, you'll find
in the piece goods the DuPont or Celanese or something
like that, we don't give them no ads, see. And, I don't
know if it's that way today, I really don't know if it's
that way today.
Q. Because you don't really get involved unless it was in the day to day activities?
A. I'm not involved, yeah.

Q. Yeah, right. Mr. Pomerantz let me ask you this, either I. you....

End of Tape 1, Side 2
... Had learned something from working with the government about sizing.

A. Yeah.

Q. So would you like to tell me about that because that's very interesting?

A. Well, I'm the first company in America that made petite dresses. We made petite dresses only.

Q. Starting in what year?

A. Right after the war. Because we did some work for the Army and, and over sixty-five percent of our orders were people under five foot five and under, women under five foot five and under. So they gave us the measurements and we had to make the dresses for the measurements, you know what I mean? And making the dresses from the measurements, it was a petite dress and we were the first one in the business that ever made a petite.

Q. Did you call them petite?

A. Yeah. We used to advertise Leslie Fay Petite. Later on our boys they wanted to know how to run.... You know I wanted someone else now to do my job. I never trusted a production man.

Q. That's because you knew an awful lot about production.

A. This, this is very interesting. Since that time, when the dresses didn't fit, I never trusted a production.
man. When I say never trust, I shouldn't say never trust, they don't do it on purpose, but people don't see their own mistakes, you know what I mean? They don't, just don't see their own mistakes; they'll pass them. We got dresses in the other day, we don't ship them yet, and, and the seams here, didn't fit at all and it looked terrible. Now if it was somebody else they would have been shipped, we found them here and they did not ship that lot out and they fixed them up, you know what I mean? Now, that's what I'm trying to say, now....

Q. Sure, but wasn't it at that time that you bought the plant in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania?

A. Yeah. I didn't buy it; I built it.

Q. Oh, you built it. Ah.

A. I, we're not allowed to ship a dress, before we ship it, that it don't come to New York to see if it's okay.

Q. In other words, you're still using that plant in Wilkes Barre? It's still there?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. And, yeah. So you built it and you trained the people, I mean was there a labor market out there?

A. You know what I did? There was no labor market but we were right next to a high school, see and we put up a factory in the high school. We didn't make garments
but we taught girls how to, and it was a girl's high, 
and we taught girls how to sew, how to press. See, 
everyday we had a different girl, a different forelady 
from out of the factory, you know what I mean?

Q. Uh, huh. And did you also use the miners? Did I read 
that somewhere?

A. The what?

Q. That was a mining town.

A. No, we used the miner's wives.

Q. Ah, the miner's wives, okay.

A. See, there was a firm always, always jealous of me, R & K. 
We ran a big ad, I didn't, I wouldn't have run the ad 
but the manager ran a big ad, your husband comes home 
from mining at this hour, he can take care of the child-
ren you can come up, work for us, we'll teach you how to 
sew and, and you know what I mean? So he saw it and he 
sent a letter to, he sent the ad to Dubinsky....

Q. Ah!

A. ...And we, we had to stop it.

Q. I see. But the people you were training, you were able 
to keep on training?

A. Yeah. We're still training.

Q. And that, you still do a lot of production there?

A. Yeah, all, most, most of our production.
Q. Yeah, the cutting and so on?
A. Yeah.

Q. So how many people do you employ there now?
A. Well, I tell you, we employ an awful lot, but I'll tell you something, I started the company because we had Pommette and Leslie Fay. If we don't sell a customer, if they miss us for a season, we won't sell them for a year. Now I don't know if they're doing that today but that was my forte, they had to buy from us and....

Q. So that was the policy of Leslie Fay?
A. Policy of Leslie Fay.

Q. That they had to buy fifteen numbers and they had to....
A. No, a minimum of fifteen....

Q. ...A minimum of fifteen numbers and they had to buy....
A. ...But I can't you an order, if I go over the orders, I'll make you a bet you won't find one order with fif... with less than fifteen numbers, have to be more.

Q. And they could never skip a season and they always had to run at least one ad a year, right?
A. I'll tell a story that just happened with us, with a big store, one of our big customers and a big office, I should say, not a big customer. You know at the office and they own all the stores. They wanted to break my policy of fifteen styles. So I hear that everybody is in this office,
in Johnny's office, the President, the Executive Vice President, general merchandising man, the merchandising man, fashion coordinator, and, oh, everybody's in the office and Johnny is getting ripped because Johnny keeps on telling me that it's not the ready to wear business that you knew, you know? And that's the only thing I have fights with him everyday about.

Q. Currently, you mean.
A. Yeah. Because I say it's the same way but if you give a customer once one thing, they want it all the time, you know what I mean? They lose respect for you.

Q. Right, yes.
A. You get what I mean?
Q. Sure.
A. I come in there and Johnny is weakening, they want to do away with the fifteen styles.

Q. Excuse me, the whole group of them is in there and you're listening.
A. I'm listening and I hear Johnny say, Johnny is weakening, you know? So I get up, Irving, Irving Shenendorf was there, who, that's the fellow that's there for forty eight years. And I said, I get up, and the fashion coordinator says to me, if I want to buy three dresses, if I only like three dresses on your line I'll buy the three dresses and all
the stores will buy the three dresses. If I like four, eight, ten, twelve, they'll buy them. They'll only buy what I like. I says, why, are you going to pick out the good styles? Yes. I says, why the hell do you want to work for Allied? You can work for me for a million dollars a year, if you could only pick out good style because nobody will get stuck with our dresses and we'll be the hottest firm in America, you know. And, then I get through with that and I said, Jerry Zip, if you break the policy that I started when we opened Leslie Fay, I'm going to fire you. Irving Schenendorf, if you break the policy, I'm going to fire you and Johnny Pomerantz, if you break the policy, you're going to be fired too. So he gets up and I get very angry and I use a four letter word, I'm going to knock your, your F-----, seven letters, so there, there's an i n g on the end, head off, now sit down, and I'm ready to hit him and I walked out and I slammed the door. And they said, you know something, he's right, he's right Johnny, you owe your father an apology and you fellows, you didn't say anything, you weren't fresh so you can..., but we will forget about it. And I don't mean to sell, I don't want to sell a store that's not going to do well with our merchandise. You know I had a customer called the May Company in Los Angeles.
that give me four hundred thousand a year and we didn't get a reorder for a year. I made a special trip out to see them and I didn't, we didn't get a reorder. I don't want to sell that department put me in another department. I says, I remember the last time I was here, you have a small department, instead of doing four hundred thousand at wholesale here, I may do twenty five to thirty five thousand dollars at wholesale here. Here's where I want to be. They says, you can't be there. I said, well don't buy from us. I call up, I says, have you got any orders going to the May Company? Cancel them. Because, I'll tell you why I say that. When the May Company comes to New York, when he sees a buyer, and he says, Jesus, I'm not reordering anything, he's hurting me, you know? So I'll never forget this as long as I live; now I'm going home, on the plane and I says, Jesus, I'm getting, maybe I'm getting too old, maybe I shouldn't, maybe I shouldn't close these accounts because maybe they're going to prove, they're going to tell me to go to hell and I won't have any, you know? Now if I knew a style is good, bad, you know when I used to wait on a customer, I used to show them the dress, if they bought it, they bought it and that.... Sometimes I would say, everybody is buying this dress, I don't know if it's good or not, but they're buying.
it. Because when you bought the dress, I'm not responsible, but if you didn't buy a dress that's reordering, I'd call up and make you buy a hundred and fifty of them, you know what I mean? If it's reordering, and you'd sell it. Because when a number is good, it's sold all over the country.
Thursday, November 5th, a second interview with Fred Pomerantz founder of Leslie Fay Inc.

Q. Now, what I'd like to talk about today is something about what happened when you went public and how you feel about that, how did it affect business? How did it change the business? You know just anything that you have to say about it. My question was when was it really born? One article said 1959 and the other said 1962 when it went public it was doing sixteen million. So....

A. We went public in 1962, let me make sure.

Q. Okay.

A. In September of sixty two.

Q. In September of sixty two you went public? And that was over the counter.

A. Yeah.

Q. Yes, okay. And at that time you were doing about sixteen million according to my records. Okay? So, could you just talk to me about what happened from that point on? How did that change your business? Did it change the way you did business?

A. How did it change my business?

Q. The way you ran your business, did it affect you in some way?

A. The only thing that affected me, I ran a one man business
before and when I went public, I decided that I can't run a one man business and be on the stock exchange. So I started to build people up and build the organization. In other words, I'll give you an idea, we had one, one production man, so I called him into my office and I said I wanted him to have three pub... see I want you to have two assistants and assistants to be as good as you are. And I says, the trouble with you, you're insecure, so I'll give you a lifetime contract if you get two men that are as good as you, that I'll okay that it's as good as you, because I've been born a production man you know. See, and I taught this, this production man everything he knew. I made him good. I says, I'm giving you four weeks, if you want this contract for a lifetime contract.

Q. Four weeks to get the two assistants?

A. Four weeks to get the two assistants. So he says to me, okay, it's a deal. Well six weeks went by and he didn't have anybody. So I called him back into my office and I says, your contract is void, I'm not giving you that contract. But if you don't get anybody in that I'm satisfied with, I'm going to fire you because I told you that I got to have people that in case you get sick, that I don't want to start being a production man again. I want someone
else to do your job and I want you to be able to go to the factories and go around and look at things like I do. Well then he got, he got people in and a funny thing happened, three weeks later he has a heart attack.

Q. Oh my God.

A. But he was alright after, a short heart attack.

Q. He came back?

A. Yeah. And...

Q. So it was as though you really had, before you saw, you foresaw it.

A. That's what I did, in other words, in other words, I start building people up and I start hiring people. Like I built, I had a President, I made a man a President.

Q. What was his name?

A. Buchalter.

Q. Yeah, Zachary.

A. And I, I let him, let him be President and he died but I think it was a lucky thing he died because he lied to me and was hiding a lot of things, you know what I mean? We had an awful lot of inventory that I didn't need and, and my comptroller, if he told me, he'd be fired.

Q. Now he died in 1972? Right?

A. About that.

Q. About that. And at that point, Johnny became the President?
A. Yes.

Q. And you were the Chairman? Right?

A. I think he died before seventy two.

Q. My notes, well, my notes could be wrong, my notes say....

A. Can I, can I make sure?

Q. Yeah, please.

A. Let me check something. Just one second and I'll... This Dec..., this December will be ten years.

Q. Uh, huh, uh, huh. Yeah. So in other words, in nineteen sixty two you went public, okay? Johnny became President of Joan Leslie and at that time he was very young, wasn't he?

A. Yeah.

Q. Yeah. Alright. So he became President of one division. Do you know how many divisions you had at that point?

A. No, he, he worked at my, he worked at the factory for about three years. And this is very interesting, he worked at the factory for three years... I'm leaving here at about seven o'clock at night, I'm leaving the office at seven o'clock at night and I meet him downstairs. He was coming in to see me and he says I want to, I'd like to see you. So I say, okay, come to my club and we'll have lunch. I took him to the club and I had lunch. And he started asking me questions. What's your percentage of returns?
And he start asking me....

Q. This is your son?

A. Yeah. He start asking me so many questions, this is after he ca... and when he, he was out of college about three years, he graduated Wharton School of Business. And he start asking me questions that I couldn't, didn't know how to answer, you know? I admit that I was an illiterate guy and he started asking me these questions. I said, you know Johnny, I'm very happy you're asking me these questions because I can't answer them. How about me making you President and I'll go back to the business that I know and I'll be in charge of our production and things like that. He said, no it's not fair, you making me President because I think that Buchalter who I worked with at the factory and you got people that are here ahead of me. Just because I'm your son, I don't think I belong, get ahead of these people unless, until I qualify. I'll never forget that. Then we opened up a division called Madeleine Fauth, she was a very good designer and I put him in charge of that company.

Q. What was the name of the company? Do you remember?

A. Madeleine Fauth.

Q. It was called Madeleine Fauth. She was the first wife of Morgan Fauth? Is that the same....
A. Who?

Q. Morgan Fauth was, she was his wife, right?

A. Yeah.

Q. First wife?

A. And she was a very good designer. Should I tell you a story about her?

Q. Sure.

A. She, we hired her and we had a lot of problem using her name because the line used to be confined to Saks Fifth Avenue, all the Saks Fifth Avenue cities, and Saks Fifth Avenue wanted us to confine the line in their cities. And I said, no, we cannot confine the line to you, we do not believe in confinement. So, I get a summons from Saks Fifth Avenue and a summons from her old boss that I can't use the name Madeleine Fauth, see? Well my lawyers proved to their lawyers that you can't stop anybody from using their name, that it's on the records, using their name to earn bread, you know? So they withdrew their, their law suit and Saks Fifth Avenue started to buy from us even though we didn't confine and this is very, very interesting. I never con..., you know I, we used to be a confined, when we started Made..., Leslie Fay it was confined to one store in the city.

Q. Yes, I remember that.

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A. And, and it was very good, we were doing business very well. But some stores that we had confined with, like one certain store we did three hundred thousand dollars with, at that time, and then the next year we did two hundred and twenty and the next year we did a hundred and fifty. Now I wouldn't have never known that we were going down in one of our confined stores. But another store wanted to build us a department, you know? And they were so proud to have Leslie Fay and the general merchandise man happened to be a very good friend of mine. So, and he was a college graduate, you see, and we also owned Pommette, so the man that was running Pommette says, look, we got a customer that wants to speak to you, turn him, turn her down but the least you could do is see her and speak to her. So at that time we didn't have IBM cards, we had regular, you know, bookkeeping records, sheets, you know? So I figured I'll show her the sheet and how much business we're doing with the account and we promised the account that if they continue going up like they have been going up, that we'll never con..., we'll never give it to anybody else. So I can't, you know, so I asked, this is before I spoke to her. Oh, then I asked my bookkeeper to give me a record of what we were doing with this account, with Joseph
Horne of Pittsburgh, it was an AMC account at that time and all the AMC stores were confined. They were supposed to be the biggest stores in every big city. So she shows me how we've been going down even though our business is increasing, see I, I didn't pay attention to individual accounts because our business was increasing every year. But when I saw this, I couldn't show her the cards, I couldn't show her the ledger sheet, that's what they called it. So I couldn't, I had to talk something else. So she came in to see me and she says to me, my boss sent me up here, he wants to have Leslie Fay in his store. We'll get, we'll open up every season with a big double spread ad and every week for fifty two weeks you'll always have a full page ad every Sunday. So I said, do you have the authority to do it? She says, no but my boss would. I said, well send your boss down to see me. So she calls her boss up on the telephone and he makes a date with me to come in to see me the next day. And he brings down like a contract, it must have been written by a lawyer, giving me all the, that anytime he doesn't run an ad on us one week that I can just give them air, you know? Stop selling him or continue if I want to. It's my opinion. And when Joseph Horne, I made the deal with him, see, we signed the contract. Joseph Horne, I
didn't speak to Joseph Horne at all because I was furious at him. Because he was supposed to be, he made the biggest thing out of Leslie Fay and here he's going way down in business with it. So at seven o'clock in the morning I get a telephone call from Joseph Horne home. His wife and my wife were very friendly. In fact, she was making my wife, she was going to convert to be a Catholic, she was that good, they were very friendly. I get a call from him, he says, how can you do this without notifying me, without speaking to me? I says, if I spoke to you, you would have talked me out of it and I didn't want to be talked out of it because if you can, with the big thing that you made out of Leslie Fay and you made me feel like I was God when I was in your store, what you wanted to do and I said, I just want to be where the traffic is. I didn't want no private room, you know? And here you're going down, every, every season you're going down. So he gets steamed at me and he hangs up on me. The next morning at seven o'clock I come into the coffee shop and he's there with his buyer. So he comes up to see us and he wants to put it in writing like the other fellow did and he wants to double the figures. The other man didn't have no figures but he wanted to double his figures. He wanted to start with over five hundred thousand dollars.
TFRED POMERANTZ)

Tape 2, Side 2

a year.

Q. My God.

A. See. And I says, I can't do it, I signed the contract. So he says, okay, we did this much, next year we'll do half, next year we'll do half, and the next year we'll do nothing. I says, as long as I don't lose our friendship, I can't dictate to you and tell you what to give me. When, when I was confining the line to you, I didn't think you did right by me because I was an illiterate and I didn't know how to, how to do it. So he walks out and says, I says, well as long you don't, we don't lose our friendship... He says, you lost our friendship. I said, okay, if that's what you want. And I didn't, I wasn't a gentleman, I used the four letter word to him (and with "you" on the end) and I walked away. Well the funniest thing was that when this store ran the ad, she had the styles in her store and people knew that we were, we had the styles, that we were Leslie Fay in Joseph Horne. Well we did over five hundred thousand dollars with him that year and we did five hundred thousand dollars with the other store that advertised. So from a firm that was doing three fifty, we did a million.

Q. Fantastic.

A. Then Kaufman's came in....
Q. What year was this about?
A. This was right before we went public, a little, a little while before that. And Kaufman's came in, and they gave us fifty thousand a year, ah, five hundred thousand a year so we did a million and a half in that....
Q. In Pittsburgh.
A. ...In the three stores.
A. Well now, after you went public you, you were starting to say you really began to build up your management team because you were obviously were planning to grow, right?
A. Well, what do you mean....
Q. I mean you were sixteen million when you went public but you got to be a hundred million.
A. Yeah, well. Well at that time we built a mill. After we went public we built a mill and that mill was a gold mine and it was a big thing for us.
Q. That was for knitting?
A. Huh?
Q. For knitting?
A. Knitting mill, yeah. And....
Q. And you began to add more divisions too?
A. Yeah.
Q. So that was really why you needed that bigger management team. Now you were saying that Zachary Buchalter had died,
it'll be ten years....

A. Ten years.

Q. ...At the end of this year. So when Zachary Buchalter died, is that when John became the President?
A. Yeah.

Q. That's when John became the President and you were the Chairman?
A. And it was a funny thing that when John, when Johnny became President, we, we were making a deal with an insurance company to borrow, I don't know the exact amount, it was either fifteen million or twenty million and Zach Buchalter was a very good mouth, he had a very good mouthpiece, you know? He knew how to talk to people, I'll admit to that. And what I mean by a good mouthpiece, when he spoke to people they believed him, you know what I mean? If he went to Wall Street and spoke to the analysts, they all had some... I don't know what it was, but he was a good speaker and they had respect for him. See, I had no education so I couldn't speak to these people, when I spoke to them, I did a pretty good job.

Q. I'll bet you did, I'll bet you did.
A. But, but I was always embarrassed. They applauded me but I always felt that, you know, that I wanted somebody to be a President. I didn't know, oh, I wanted my son John
to be a President and he insisted that I put Zach Buchalter because he worked for Zach Buchalter for three years in the factory, you know? So it was Johnny's fault. Johnny says, he, he, I shouldn't go above him, you know? And then, when, when Buchalter died I put Johnny in there. Oh, so I started telling you that we borrowed, I don't remember the exact amount, twenty million or twenty five million from the insurance company and as I said, that Buchalter sold the bill. Well when Buchalter died they wanted to renege.

Q. They wanted to renege on the, on the loan.

A. Yeah. They didn't want the.... And the person I had that, making the deal, I says, I'll tell you what I'll do with you, I says, I'll give you all my stock that I have, if he don't do better than, than, than Buchalter, you can keep the stock. And I had a lot of stock and it was selling for fifteen or sixteen dollars a share. I was giving them twenty five million dollars worth of stock that if he didn't do a better job than Buchalter. Because I tried to fire Buchalter three times and my accountant and my lawyer talked me out of it. Because he really had a terrific personality and mouthpiece, you know?

Q. Yes. But after he, then when he died, that's when John
(FRED POMERANTZ)

became President and you resumed being a Chairman?
A. Yeah.

Q. And you devoted yourself to administration?
A. Well I was the Chairman all along.

Q. I see, I see. So John was just the President of one division until Buchalter died.
A. Yeah.

Q. And then he became President of the whole corporation?
A. That's right.

Q. Yeah. And so, he... How did you divide up, you were the administration person and, how did you divide up your jobs between you, you and John?
A. Well I was the Chief Executive Officer....

Q. I see, okay. And he was the Chief Operating Officer?
A. Yeah.

Q. Right. So, but, when it came to making decisions about whether you acquired a business or built one up yourself or whether you hired top management or who... or promoted from within....
A. Well, as I said, I didn't have a one man business....

Q. Yeah, right.
A. ...So we spoke about it and we let a lot of people, we didn't hire a lot of people because he either didn't like them or I didn't like them, you know? I didn't think he
was capable, not like, I shouldn't use the word like but he didn't think he was capable or I didn't think he was capable and we got along.

Q. So you really worked as a team on the things that you....
A. Yeah, as a team.

Q. Yes, right. How did you happen to have so many, you went... you have so many divisions today, you have really, I was, just look, reading a list of them in that newest report, before you acquired Head Ski, you already had Sasson Suitz, Fay's Closet, Outlander, Joan Leslie, Castleberry Knits, J.L. Sport, Victoire, Breckenridge, Leslie Fay, Personal Breckenridge Petites, CB Two. What's CB Two?
A. Well, you see, these are all smaller companies....

Q. That are part of the....
A. That are part of Breckenridge. Like we had Breckenridge and we had another department in Breckenridge....

Q. Called Petites?
A. Yeah.

Q. Right.
A. And CB Two was just a, a new division that, that Castleberry built.

Q. Okay. And Nativo is that separate?
A. And Nativo was... yes.

Q. And Leslie Pomer was the women's....
A. Leslie Pomer is the women's dresses.

Q. And L.F. Petite is Leslie....

A. L.F. Petite is for Leslie Fay Petite dresses for women under five foot five.

Q. And then Personal Petites and Personal Two are both offshoots of Personal?

A. It's the same, yeah, it's the same as Personal.

Q. Right. And now you're acquiring Head or haven't you really acquired it?

A. We, yes, we're, I think we're signed up.

Q. Congratulations it's a g....

A. Thank you.

Q. It's a good company, very good. Is Alex, Alex Shuster still there?

A. Huh?

Q. Is Alex....

A. I don't know who's there I'm....

Q. Who's the President of....

A. ...I'm not having anything to do with them.

Q. I see, uh, huh.

A. I don't know if you know, we sold our company, we're selling our company.

Q. When, yeah, that's what I'd like to clarify....

A. Yes, you know that.
Q. You're, you're going private....
A. Yeah.

Q. ...But you've taken in a couple of private investors?
A. I'm selling my stock....
Q. You are?
A. Yeah.

Q. To your private investors?
A. Yes. No, to the company.
Q. To the company.
A. To the company.
Q. Okay.
A. And they're buying the whole company. Johnny is one and then there's three other men, there's only four partners but Johnny is in complete charge.
Q. I see.
A. ...Of the company.
Q. And that's happening right now?
A. Yeah. It didn't happen yet because we got to get, we got to get permission from the FTC, FTC....
Q. Yeah, right.
A. ...And from the..., we got to have a stockholders meeting...
Q. Sure.
A. ...And everybody's got to agree to it.
Q. Right, right, yeah. That's very interesting though, you're
the first company in this market which has done that, to my knowledge.

A. Yeah.

Q. I mean you were one of the first to go public, right? And now, you're, you are the first, that I know of, to go into a different formation. So it's very interesting that I, that I should happen, accidentally, to interview you at this time. It's really very interesting. Because you started a whole era and now you're ushering in another era all in one lifetime. That's quite an achievement.

A. And I think that this company is going to be very, very big.

Q. It's not small right now.

A. Huh?

Q. It's not what you call small?

A. No, but it will be, it's that it's, I think it, in two or three years, it will be much larger.

Q. Really? Let me see....

A. Because all these small companies are growing up. Like you take Fay's Closet....

Q. Yes.

A. We had bad management and now we got good management and its got to go up. You know it's hard to get management, that's the trouble.
Q. And you prefer people who have been trained within the organization?
A. Yeah, I like that.

Q. Yes. Because then they know what your methods are and they know how you feel about production and quality control?
A. I think our quality control is the best in America.

Q. And so you prefer, you really like to have people who are, have been exposed to that.
A. Yeah. I'll tell you something, if you'd come down here in the morning, we get dresses from Pennsylvania. Before we ship it, when a style comes in from the factory, every one goes on a girl, nobody's allowed to look at those dresses in our Receiving Department, they're supposed to look at it in the factory, our quality men go to the factory, you know? Now if they come in, we don't trust anybody, the quality man or the production man, or anybody. I have two other people looking at the dresses when they come in from the factory, before they're shipped. And, and you see, people don't see their own mistakes, you know?

Q. Yes, you have to be objective.
A. And I learnt that, I learnt that a long time ago and I'm teaching that to every one of our companies. That you
can't trust any production man, it's not trusting him, I shouldn't use the word trusting him, but he doesn't see his own mistakes, you know what I mean? That six eyes are better than two. And we don't offend them, that he's a lousy production man, but maybe the factory did it wrong or maybe his first pattern was wrong. And we don't ship it unless we can fix it and if we can't fix it we sell it off price and we don't ship it to a customer.

Q. And you're hoping that that's a tradition that will continue even when there's the change over in this business?
A. Oh yes. It, it's, it can't, it's got to be that way.

Q. Tell me something, what are you going to do when this business has been changed or restructured or whatever you want to call it, are you, how, how are....
A. If, if we don't sell a department store, I'm talking about Leslie Fay now, I'll make you a bet, I don't care what store you go to, if they don't do business with us, they'll say, do you know the Pomerantz's? Can you fix it up for us to do business?

Q. I'll bet.
A. Now that's the gospel truth and I'll say, that we're not loved, we're respected.
Q. Uh, huh. Well I think that's a pretty good thing, I mean, you don't have to have the love of everybody but when you have the respect of everybody, then you're in a very special kind of situation and I think that, that it's just terrific. I really do. I think I'm going to say that I thank and I'm sure there's a lot more that I wish I knew but I think I've asked you what I'd like to.

A. Well whenever you want to, let me know, you can see me.

Q. Right. Well thank you.
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