This is tape #2. The date is May 10, 1972. We’re talking to Frank Gianotti in his office. The interviewers are Joan Beifuss and Carol Lynn Yellin.

Joan Beifuss: Why didn’t the city just fire all of the striking sanitation workers?

Frank Gianotti: It seems to me that maybe they did say they were fired at one point.

Joan Beifuss: Well, there was one point in that injunction hearing where I think Civella, the union lawyer got up and said that in fact all the men have quit. And I -- we’ve got the transcript and I can’t make head nor tail of that.

Frank Gianotti: Yeah, that’s right. He said they’d quit, you’re right. Well, it was just -- he almost, I thought, sort of grinned when he made that announcement in Judge Hopkins’ court.

Joan Beifuss: But when he said that then, couldn’t you have all just said fine, they’re all gone. We can forget the whole thing.

Frank Gianotti: Well, they at the time though, they were over there still haranguing the city council, and we were trying to stop all the turmoil.

Joan Beifuss: Well, why would Civella…?

Frank Gianotti: Well, he was trying to get out from under the injunction and keep Jerry Wurf from going to jail, I guess.

Joan Beifuss: But if he’d have done that, there wouldn’t have been any strike would there?

Frank Gianotti: Oh, they were still on strike, and they were still marching, and they were still sitting in the council chambers, they were still walking up and down the streets with all these black cars and everything. They had -- Main Street was just about as dead as anything could be. Nobody could go to town. The merchants were all concerned.

Joan Beifuss: How badly hurt were the merchants, do you have any idea how badly they were hurt?

Frank Gianotti: Oh, they were hurt. I wouldn’t know. You would have to talk to some of them, but it was bad. It was bad.

Joan Beifuss: I mean when you came downtown you could notice the difference.

Frank Gianotti: Oh…people just weren’t coming to town at all. Of course people are not coming to town now, but that’s different. (muffled) Yeah, yeah. I think there was
more traffic.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Has ever an estimate been made of the amount of, or the number of legal cases that grew out of that strike situation? Not just cases. I don’t know whether -- questions, things that the city would not have gotten into. Maybe what I’m getting at is also how much, really how much it cost the city, handling this unexpected strike situation.

Frank Gianotti: Well, I wouldn’t know how to answer that from the business standpoint. I know it was bad. Now from the city’s standpoint, one byproduct that I remember was (muffled) police department and in the fire department cost the city of Memphis a lot of money in retirement because your overtime is part of your retirement pay, based on your last year’s salary, including overtime. Some of these people, some of these men -- oh I hate to guess. They had 100 hours, or 120 hours in a week. Some of them were working around the clock, two or three days at a time.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Remember, some of the police officers retired, they retired early, didn’t they?

Frank Gianotti: And fire, police -- oh, yes they did.

Carol Lynn Yellin: In order to take advantage.

Frank Gianotti: I wouldn’t want to mention their names, but the record shows who they were. Because each year they’d stay on it would go down, you see. Either the last year or five previous years, whichever is greater. Well, the longer they stayed, the more of that last year’s time they lost. So, I would think that a number of them left on that (muffled).

Carol Lynn Yellin: Has that law been changed, or that ruling? It still exists?

Frank Gianotti: It’s still in there. That’s for overtime. Now, the city attorneys or their assistants or any of these people I work with, we didn’t get any overtime. You don’t get overtime.

Carol Lynn Yellin: You just work.

Frank Gianotti: Yeah. On appointed positions you don’t get overtime. And the thing that happened, too, that’s sort of interesting in a way, that when POP was formed, that’s this form of government we have now, they gave -- they put the fire and police department in civil service. They had never been in civil service before that. So, by being in civil service meant that the chief of police and all the assistant chiefs and all that, they were in -- they couldn’t get overtime.

Carol Lynn Yellin: The executive people, too. I mean the administrative people.
Frank Gianotti: Of course they -- it wasn’t put in there with that in mind. That was just a byproduct of it. The rest of it, I don’t know. Insurance rates went up tremendously, and a lot of people couldn’t get insurance in these areas. It’s hard to get insurance now.

Carol Lynn Yellin: I was thinking also of things like the suits against the city; well, like the Larry Payne suit. Were there any other…?

Frank Gianotti: Oh, no business suits. Now there were suits in New York and some other places, and they’ve got different laws up there, which permit…

Carol Lynn Yellin: Oh, really, where a businessman…?

Frank Gianotti: Yes, some businesspeople sued, say Mayor X because he didn’t stop all this business, and because he didn’t get the National Guard in here quicker, or something like that.

Joan Beifuss: Have any of those suits been decided in favor of the plaintiff?

Frank Gianotti: I haven’t followed them up, I don’t know. But I do remember reading about them, and especially in New York, they had millions of dollars up there in that garbage strike.

Joan Beifuss: Yeah, I never thought of that, yeah. But you couldn’t do that here, under…legally you can’t do that in Memphis?

Frank Gianotti: Well, if they did -- nobody tried it, and I was…

Joan Beifuss: Maybe they didn’t know about it.

Carol Lynn Yellin: And you weren’t about to bring it up.

Frank Gianotti: I wasn’t going to bring it up. And we (muffled) municipal immunity. One thing I might mention in that in some interim, I remember Governor Ellington was very cooperative (muffled). I think when they finally decided to call the National Guard in there was much deliberation about that. I was in Mayor Loeb’s office when the decision was made. And we got through to Governor Ellington, I would say in less than a minute.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Is that right?

Joan Beifuss: That was the morning that the march broke up.

Frank Gianotti: It was the day, whatever it was, that we decided to bring in the guard, the National Guard. And, prior to that time there had been some higher-level meetings, you know, (muffled) police department. We were talking it over, and decided to do, or not to do, and it was a very serious step to call in the National Guard.
Joan Beifuss: Well, what else could have been done at that point?

Frank Gianotti: Well, we finally concluded that that was the only thing to do.

Carol Lynn Yellin: You don’t remember who else was involved in that decision at this point?

Frank Gianotti: Oh, Armour, and Lux, and MacDonald, and…

Carol Lynn Yellin: Armour was there representing…

Frank Gianotti: Oh, he was, yeah.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Was he with the state then?

Frank Gianotti: He was, yeah, he came back for something.

Carol Lynn Yellin: He was, was he Safety Commissioner?

Frank Gianotti: Yeah, he was up in Nashville.

Carol Lynn Yellin: He was state Safety Commissioner.

Frank Gianotti: Yeah.

Joan Beifuss: Does the city, when the National Guard comes in, does the city bear any of the expense for the National Guard in a particular locale, or is it all state funds?

Frank Gianotti: My recollection is it’s state funds.

Joan Beifuss: State funds.

Frank Gianotti: And whether we had some small expense or not, I don’t know. For a side issue, I am not sure about that. Mainly it was not, it was state.

Joan Beifuss: I wondered, if you wanted to feed the National Guard or what not, I suppose the state pays for the food (muffled).

Frank Gianotti: That’s my recollection, yeah.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Did Governor Ellington -- had you had any state legal sources during the strike?

Frank Gianotti: Not that I remember.
Joan Beifuss: Or had you contacted anyone outside of Memphis for opinions on this kind of a situation?

Frank Gianotti: My recollection is that we picked up that injunction suit, and went on with it and canceled (muffled). And on the federal suit, that was ours, and that was our suit.

Carol Lynn Yellin: I wanted to go back to something about the duties of the city attorney. Did you also advise the City Council? When being legal council to the city, does that include the entire city government? I was thinking of this, you said Jesse Vineyard was an assistant city attorney, and was also…

Frank Gianotti: He reported to me.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Right.

Frank Gianotti: Now if a councilman would ask Jesse Vineyard to draw an ordinance or something, certainly he would do it for them. He would usually tell me, you know, what was going on.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Well, did any legal, I mean did any questions from individual councilmen come up? For instance, in…

Frank Gianotti: You mean growing out of this situation?

Carol Lynn Yellin: Growing out of this. I was thinking of things like, if they would do an ordinance, any individual councilmen, like wasn’t there an ordinance that J.O. Patterson introduced at one point?

Frank Gianotti: Yes, they’ve done some of that. See, you had Jerry Blanchard, and Lewis Donelson, and different ones who were lawyers on the council. There was no reason why they couldn’t draw an ordinance if they wanted to. But, usually we know something about it.

Joan Beifuss: When you went back into final negotiations then after King was killed and when Reynolds came in from Washington, was the city under pressure from the federal government to settle the thing?

Frank Gianotti: That’s the time I was absent. I knew generally what was going on. I remember talking to Mr. Reynolds one time about something that Wurf said he was going to do. We didn’t think he would have done it. Oh, that was I believe in connection with the hospital strike, it seemed like to me that they had a wildcat strike out there, and I think we called Mr. Reynolds and asked him to get in touch with Jerry Wurf, but we were not successful.

Carol Lynn Yellin: That was the strike in the summer of ‘68? The hospital strike?
Frank Gianotti: If that’s when it was.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Yeah, because that was the…

Joan Beifuss: How about during the sanitation strike, why was there no attempt to get any kind of federal mediation or anything like that? Could you have gotten federal mediation on that strike? Or did you not think it was that serious yet, or? As it was dragging on…

Frank Gianotti: Well, our position was all the time we were willing to talk with these people, but legally we had no obligation, we had no legal authority to negotiate with them as long as they were out on strike.

Joan Beifuss: But there was no thought on your part to get some kind of outside…?

Frank Gianotti: Later on there was suggestion made to Mayor Loeb and I think as a result of that we did get Frank Miles into it. Prior to that time I don’t have any recollection of it.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Several things that have been mentioned we like to ask people about, simply to get different recollections of it, and one of the things that a couple of people, more than a couple have mentioned -- a headline that once appeared in the Memphis paper using the word “compromise.” A couple of people have said that then Mayor Loeb changed his mind because he did not feel that he was compromising, and that actually the headline had influence on his thinking. Do you recall that incident?

Frank Gianotti: I remember the reaction that some of my friends, I mean you know who knew and were involved in this thing, and they’d say (muffled) some of them were against labor, generally speaking. They’d say, ‘Frank, y’all are doing a good job, but when are you going to get this thing settled?’ and, I mean this was the attitude I personally got. That was the businessman wanted this thing settled. Whether that had any influence on Henry Loeb or not, I wouldn’t say so. I don’t think so.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Did you get a lot of letters? This is something -- I know the mayor was getting a great many letters. I suppose the approving letters from the people would mostly go to Mayor Loeb’s office wouldn’t they?

Joan Beifuss: Did you get the feeling from your friends that were saying, you know, ‘we agree with you’re doing, but end it,’ -- did you get any kind of feeling at what point they wanted it ended? What kind of concessions they would have been willing to make to end it?

Frank Gianotti: Well, dues check off was the main thing. That was the main hold-up all the way through from the minute Ciampa got here until the thing was all over, really, dues check off.
Joan Beifuss: How about groups like -- was there any kind of official pressure from groups like the Chamber of Commerce, on the city to end it, stop it?

Frank Gianotti: No, not that I personally know about. Whether they talked to Henry Loeb about it, I don’t know. But when the council adopted that resolution, in effect saying to negotiate with them, then I personally felt that we were in a difficult position.

Carol Lynn Yellin: The time that…?

Frank Gianotti: Whatever the date of that resolution was.

Joan Beifuss: Why? Why did you feel you were in a difficult position?

Frank Gianotti: Well, here’s the council and then they’ve got the authority to pass laws and ordinances, and when they passed that resolution, why that was an indication of how the majority felt.

Joan Beifuss: Could the council have passed an ordinance very early saying give them the dues check off? Was that in the council’s (muffled)?

Frank Gianotti: There was some legal question about whether they had the authority to do that in view of one of these cases I mentioned back there a little while ago, as to whether or not the charter of the city of Memphis was broad enough to authorize such an ordinance.

Joan Beifuss: What is your feeling now on that? Do you think it would have been broad enough?

Frank Gianotti: In view of these cases I still have to say that they do not have a (muffled) legislation. They’d have to put it on a referendum now, because we (muffled). We let the people vote on it.

Carol Lynn Yellin: So that really you were in, you were really in a terribly awkward position legally. I mean there weren’t very many ways out of this situation.

Frank Gianotti: We had the law on our side, but we couldn’t prevent people from coalition of the laboring people and poor people from getting together, including 20,000 to 30,000 people on the streets.

Carol Lynn Yellin: So that it was really -- and yet that wouldn’t have happened you feel, without the assassination. I mean you still feel, because…

Frank Gianotti: I think we would have won the strike.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Would have won the strike and the men would have gone back to
work, and then it would have been the negotiation as you had…

Frank Gianotti: Yeah. Right, from the very beginning we would have sat down, and because personally I thought that this thing was wrong, and said so publicly.

Carol Lynn Yellin: But it was really a matter of doing it the legal way within the established rules of the system.

Frank Gianotti: That’s where you got two reported cases that tell you that’s the law.

Joan Beifuss: What were the two?

Frank Gianotti: There’s one Court of Appeals decision, and a Supreme Court decision.

Joan Beifuss: Do you recall the name of the Supreme Court decision?

Frank Gianotti: Supreme Court of Tennessee.

Joan Beifuss: Oh you’re talking about the thing based on the injunction.

Frank Gianotti: No, the authority of the city of Memphis, the legal authority of the city of Memphis to sit down and bargain and negotiate with the union. We just don’t have that authority. And it’s been held in these two cases.

Joan Beifuss: Is one of them the Alcoa case?

Frank Gianotti: The Alcoa case is one of them, and the other is a county case. I read it the other day in connection with something else. I may be able to get it for you.

Joan Beifuss: I’m just kind of curious. I knew about the Alcoa case, but I didn’t know about the other one.

Frank Gianotti: It’s some county. It’s a county opinion and I think it was written by Judge (muffled).

Carol Lynn Yellin: We might ask you to look that up later.

Joan Beifuss: There were statements from Wurf rather early on that, in fact, other municipalities in Tennessee had bargained with unions.

Frank Gianotti: We kept asking for those, and he never could find them.

Joan Beifuss: And they never showed up.

Frank Gianotti: As I remember they never showed up.
Joan Beifuss: Did your staff try to find them at all?

Frank Gianotti: But it’s my understanding, if you bring it up to date, (muffled) here is working with the union in the hospital, is working for the county now. He has had some experience as a city attorney. He’s not with the city any more, but he told me that just within the past two weeks that the Attorney General’s office had written an opinion saying that they had no right to bargain.

Joan Beifuss: The state attorney? The state attorney general?

Frank Gianotti: Came out of (muffled) office. I asked him to get me a copy of it, but I haven’t gotten it. You might ask him if he’s still there.

Joan Beifuss: Then, in effect, any municipality in the state then is still in a quasi-legal position when it comes to any kind of accommodation with unions, right?

Frank Gianotti: Well, it may be that they do have some agreements, but that doesn’t necessarily mean they’re valid.

Joan Beifuss: What would be your solution to this kind of thing?

Frank Gianotti: Wurf says, and I imagine he knows his statistics in that little book that I have showed you (muffled) a number of states that have passed legislation. Now, the last session of the legislature they have a bill up there that (muffled) did some work on. I think (muffled) did some work on it. It passed the house almost unanimously. When it got over in the senate, Henry Loeb personally went to Nashville. And some people say that he is given credit for having instigated the movement that resulted in the defeat in the Senate. And this year I don’t think it got off the ground at all.

Joan Beifuss: And that would have allowed…

Frank Gianotti: This is the bill that Wurf talks about there that would authorize negotiations with the unions in the governmental field. In many respects, similar to, you know, the labor laws.

Joan Beifuss: What is the objection to this?

Frank Gianotti: Well, I have a lot of personal…I’m not against unions. Some people are, but if they want to get together in the private field, but it looks to me the first thing you make the taxpayer pays twice. He’s paying a so-called competent individual, you know, to treat people fairly and decently, and if he isn’t treating them fairly and decently, then he ought to be fired, or something ought to happen to him. You ought not to superimpose somebody else to come in there and do the same job for which this man is making the employee pay for. That’s my principal objection to it.

Carol Lynn Yellin: What could be the, if there’s a lag, I mean if it’s an elected official
that feels he has a grievance against, and that elected official can’t be put out of office.

Frank Gianotti:  You can defeat him at the polls, unless he’s guilty of (muffled) in office, then you can put him out.  And we’re talking theory now.

Carol Lynn Yellin:  Incidentally before you go on, I wanted to get the, just for the tape, the book that you were speaking of was this book, *Sorry, No Government Today, The Unions versus City Hall*, edited by Robert E. Walsh, Beacon Press.  Because I know somebody will listen to this and they’ll say, ‘oh what book were they talking about.’

Frank Gianotti:  I know that came out and, I think, the American Bar (muffled) reference to it in one of my periodicals here, and I just thought I’d get it.

Carol Lynn Yellin:  It would be interesting to have -- it does mention the Memphis situation.

Joan Beifuss:  But what I’m still unclear about -- wouldn’t things be simplified between the city and the city’s employees if there were something like the NLRB in operation?  If you structured something.

Frank Gianotti:  Well, Neal has worked on a number of American Bar committees, one thing or another, and he’s gone to two or three of these meetings, and Friarson has gone to two or three of these meetings, and Jim, I remember told me here a couple years ago that the whole thing seemed to be a hodge podge, and it says about the same thing in this book, that they just haven’t found any complete answer to it.  I read an article here the other day about this situation, and what did they call it now?  They call it some sort of a -- it’s a slow-down type of operation.  And this is a professor somewhere in Michigan I think, who suggested this.  It’s slowdown, and then in the meantime a certain amount of money is put into a (muffled), a pool, and this money is used principally for awards, or sending people to school, tuitions, and things of that kind. And, at some point, and both sides put money into this pool.  And it’s a slowdown stoppage.  They don’t call it a strike, and they say it sort of -- it may be, they hadn’t really tried it out yet, it may be an answer to this, if people get tired of putting money into a pool that’s going to a charitable purpose or something like that.

Joan Beifuss:  You mean, in essence both the employees and the city would be being fined and putting money in, is that kind of what you mean.

Frank Gianotti:  Yeah, and then the city would be putting money into it.  If they didn’t pay these people they’d put a certain portion of money into it, and then the union representing these people would put some of their money in there.  As their money goes down they’re getting tired of this thing along the route.  That was this man’s suggestion.

Joan Beifuss:  Then that would avoid the illegality of a strike, is that what he was…

Frank Gianotti:  Right.
Joan Beifuss:  Did you see where George Meany the other day said that strikes are passe?

Frank Gianotti:  I did see that, I did see that.

Carol Lynn Yellin:  Well, of course to me the interesting thing is that you say it’s still unsettled, and I certainly would agree.  And I remember when this strike first started, having studied in school about the Boston police strike in 1906.

Frank Gianotti:  They talk about it in that book there.

Carol Lynn Yellin:  Did it?  And, I remember having studied about this, and that this was the making of Calvin Coolidge or something.  And I thought then, that it’s still not settled in 1968, and it’s still not settled in (muffled) 1919, was it -- well, I’m making too old.

Frank Gianotti:  I believe that -- if I could find this thing, I believe it’s right in here somewhere.

Joan Beifuss:  Well, do you feel yourself that something’s got to be done with this whole situation of municipalities and their employees, that some kind of order has got to be put into it?  Because it looks like its getting worse instead of better.

Frank Gianotti:  It does, and I was talking to Brady about it the other day, and I think he felt pretty much the same way I do.  In fact, I just don’t believe in unions in government.  I’ll start from that premise.  Now, I don’t say that government is all that good that it doesn’t need correction.  I know that there are inequities, and I know that these things ought to be worked out.  Apparently civil service is not the answer to it, a real top-notch personnel department might be able to do better, you know, but they have to go through all these levels, and supervisors and foremen, and down to the man, and they really won’t agree.  There ain’t a doubt about it.  Every time I turn around, you know, here I’m talking about grievance procedures (muffled).

Carol Lynn Yellin:  Some of the problems could go back to getting the tax money to implement any, the kind of…

Frank Gianotti:  Oh, well there you get the union into it from that standpoint you’ve really got a problem, and that’s one of the things they talk about here.  That, as a negotiator for the city there’d be no way for me to go out and agree with Jerry Wurf or anybody else that we were going to pay you $2.35 an hour.  So, because when the time comes that individual councilman up there has got to vote for a tax increase, and there’s no way for me to bind him, and I don’t think legally he can delegate the authority to me to say go out and settle this thing, because then you are abusing your power to tax.

Carol Lynn Yellin:  And when you are negotiating with union people as an outside
agency, but you are negotiating for the city, but you are always aware that you don’t have
the same freedom that, say, private management does in negotiating, because in private
management you can go back and say ‘we’ve got to do this,’ but you can’t go back to the
city council and say, we’ve got to do it. They’ll say, well we aren’t going to.

Frank Gianotti: And they’ve got a charter limitation on what they can pay. You reach a
real impasse. I mean that’s the reason I say that it’s not logical to have unions in
government. I mean, unless they pass a law, and apparently none of these laws have
worked too well. The Taylor law in New York, I don’t think people are satisfied.

Joan Beifuss: Nothing works in New York, no matter what.

Frank Gianotti: Wurf says the more punishment you put to these laws the worse it is,
and the less effective they are.

Joan Beifuss: I am still kind of confused about the city council’s power in this whole
thing. Now, the city council had budget power. The city council, but the city council
didn’t have the power to say there should be a dues check off.

Frank Gianotti: We took the position that was administrative.

Joan Beifuss: Administrative.

Frank Gianotti: And that this charter provides that they shall not interfere in the
administration.

Joan Beifuss: Because it concerns personnel policy, is that what it would be?

Frank Gianotti: Well, dues check off can come back to the legal authority to do these
things again. So, the city didn’t do it. When it went through the credit union there was
a narrow field in there and it was -- really I didn’t care for it too much as a legal
proposition, but when you examined it, there was nothing wrong with it.

Joan Beifuss: You could get it through there.

Frank Gianotti: Because, if the individual wanted to give a dues check off, signed it and
say, you pay Mr. Wurf, or whoever it was $4 or $6 whatever it was, that their money, I
mean they had earned it by the time that it was…

Joan Beifuss: Are there two city credit unions?

Frank Gianotti: Yes.

Joan Beifuss: What is the difference?

Frank Gianotti: Well, let’s see. One of them I think was just for sanitation workers as I
remember, and the Department of Public Works, and the other one is another credit union.

Joan Beifuss: Now, which did the dues check off?

Frank Gianotti: The sanitation department (muffled).

Joan Beifuss: Now there were early on in the strike, also there were -- Wurf and Ciampa or somebody was making statements that, for instance, the Red Cross dues were taken out of paychecks, and all kinds of stuff was taken out of paychecks.

Frank Gianotti: Yeah, one of our arguments was we didn’t have any more room on the checks for check off.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Oh really.

Frank Gianotti: We used up all the space. Yeah, they did make that statement.

Joan Beifuss: Well, was that true.

Frank Gianotti: Yes, they did. (muffled) particularly. I don’t know about Red Cross, but they did for (muffled).

Joan Beifuss: Why didn’t they get to the credit union thing earlier then, why couldn’t everyone agree.

Frank Gianotti: Well, the credit union idea wasn’t mentioned at first. It came along as a byproduct, and I think Wurf brought that up if I’m not mistaken. He said that he had had, I believe he said he had experience with it somewhere.

Carol Lynn Yellin: In fact, Councilman Netters, on some of the film we looked at the other night after the strike was over, and he said he wanted -- in his final vote, he said he wanted to remind people that had been criticizing him, I guess he meant in the black community had been saying he hadn’t done enough, and he wanted to remind them that he had done some research on this.

Frank Gianotti: I went with him. We went together to the credit union officials in the building when this thing first came out. We both talked to them.

Joan Beifuss: What did they say to that.

Frank Gianotti: They didn’t want to say anything. They were waiting for word from Washington I think, and I believe they finally got it; maybe somebody, I forgot who worked there, whether Miles Davis or somebody.

Carol Lynn Yellin: I wanted to ask something. We’re getting -- we don’t want to take
Frank Gianotti: That’s all right. I am still sorry that I ran out on you.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Well, we’re so grateful.

Joan Beifuss: We had a really relaxing time looking at your view.

Carol Lynn Yellin: But, I’m interested in, just you know, what might have been and the if’s that are involved in all of this. I don’t think there’s any doubt that P.J. Ciampa was an abrasive personality for Memphis and for the people who dealt with him.

Frank Gianotti: Definitely. He moved out of it. He was not a prominent figure (muffled).

Carol Lynn Yellin: Well, what I was going to say, I’m thinking of his personality and, as you said Mayor Loeb is a definite personality, I mean.

Frank Gianotti: Aggressive personality.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Straight, aggressive personality. Looking back now, do you think that the situation was so insoluble, or unsolvable, that let’s say the union had sent in a more, a much lower key kind of negotiator right at the front end, or let’s say that if Wyeth Chandler were mayor at that point rather than Henry Loeb, our present mayor, Wyeth Chandler. Would it have been a different story do you think?

Frank Gianotti: That would be a real hard question to answer.

Carol Lynn Yellin: I ask hard questions.

Frank Gianotti: Yeah. Well, Mayor Loeb was definitely against the check off, all the way through.

Carol Lynn Yellin: This was personal conviction with him.

Frank Gianotti: Now what Wyeth Chandler would do, it’s hard for me to say, because I just don’t know Wyeth’s feeling. I had gotten the indication from maybe what talking to Friarson a little bit, and the fact that they worked out very quickly an agreement on the fireman’s union, I would say maybe that it is a possibility.

Joan Beifuss: Well of course they had...

Carol Lynn Yellin: And the fireman’s union didn’t have a P.J. Ciampa in. I mean what I’m saying is that from both sides there were...

Frank Gianotti: Oh no, I don’t -- yeah. Well, Ciampa, sort of... really Ciampa as far as
image is concerned, I think he helped Mayor Loeb, and I know he helped me (muffled) people are always kidding about Ciampa.

Joan Beifuss: Did you like him at all?

Frank Gianotti: Well, when you get into a situation of this kind, I mean you try to, you use some acting to some extent.

Joan Beifuss: Because we’ve read, we’ve had a couple of people say…

Frank Gianotti: He didn’t bother me too much.

Joan Beifuss: We’ve had a couple people say that ‘P.J. Ciampa was one of the nicest men you could ever meet,’ and that is just such a totally different kind of reaction than most people had of P.J. Ciampa.

Frank Gianotti: I think Ciampa -- he didn’t like that television there. He didn’t know how to act before a television audience. I don’t believe he -- he kept saying, ‘get those lights out of here, turn those lights out,’ and all this stuff, and he didn’t want to have a meeting. See, Loeb was an open man, an open office man.

Carol Lynn Yellin: So there you had really a conflict of the duties of…

Frank Gianotti: They didn’t want this. They didn’t want this.

Joan Beifuss: When the final settlement was made and the raise was given, and the city…did the city have to authorize money for that, or how did that work?

Frank Gianotti: Yeah. We had a problem. When I saw “we,” the whole city had a problem because we had these 300 or 400 people, and Mayor Loeb had promised that he would not fire these people. And we had, at one point, when we should have had 1300 people, I think we had about 1700. We tried to send these people to the labor markets in Memphis, and I know of at least one case where a man said, Frank, don’t send any more out to our place, they’re making $0.25 an hour more than we’re paying. And we had a hard time absorbing these people. I mean it cost the city a lot of money. How much, I don’t know, but Mayor Loeb wouldn’t fire them, you know. They insisted on putting all their people back. The crew chiefs -- they wanted the same position. A crew chief is a certain top-level type, and he makes a little more money. And they all -- then they had another level right below that.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Driving, something…

Frank Gianotti: See, all this was upset when we had these 300 or 400 people on crews of four and five, we didn’t have a need for all these crew chiefs, and the next layer whatever it was, it had some other name. They would stand in with the crew chief would be sick. This next position was a desired position, because he would make the money then while
the crew chief was off that the crew chief would make.

Joan Beifuss: But you finally did, I assume…

Frank Gianotti: Now I had left there about that time. Gerald Moore was still wrestling with that thing when I left in November.

Joan Beifuss: Who he was trying to move out were the people that had been hired during the strike, is that?

Frank Gianotti: No, we didn’t try to move them out. Loeb always thought that (muffled) would take care of them, but it took a long time, much longer than he thought.

Joan Beifuss: I mean when the 1000 union men came, or however many there were, came back on the job, were they the ones that you tried to place other places, or was it the people who had been hired during the strike?

Frank Gianotti: Oh, no, people who had been hired during the strike.

Carol Lynn Yellin: And that’s what I wanted to ask -- actually they had been making more for the city than sometimes you could get them when you’d get them placed elsewhere, is that…

Frank Gianotti: Right.

Carol Lynn Yellin: The people who were giving them (muffled).

Frank Gianotti: I know of one or two instances of such, and the people personally told me that.

Joan Beifuss: Now the thing where, as we understand it, someone loaned the city the money to pay -- when the raise was given and the city didn’t have the money in the budget.

Frank Gianotti: I don’t know any of that. Did somebody say that?

Joan Beifuss: Yeah, quite a few people said that. Can the city borrow money from individuals, or does a municipality ever borrow money from individuals, or does it always borrow from institutions?

Frank Gianotti: We went into that in the Fox Meadows case, and we took the position, Brady Bartusch and I handled it. We took the position that the notes that were given by Ingram to the First National Bank weren’t worth the paper they were written on.

Joan Beifuss: Why, why would that be?
Carol Lynn Yellin: That was the purchase of the golf course?

Frank Gianotti: Because the city, yes, there were certain provisions in the charter of how the city raises money. And one of them is, and this was, we couldn’t find any basis for it. What they thought they were doing, I think, was that they were going to float a bond issue and we pay the money. The city charter does provide (muffled) in anticipation of bond issues you can go to a bank and borrow money, but the object for which you are borrowing the money first has to be of public purpose, and has to be named in the initial bond resolution. And Fox Meadows wasn’t named in it. And that was the basis of our (muffled) in the Chancery Court, which was later dismissed and settled. I think the city really, I think saved some money. I never did follow through on that. I think they brought it to around a million instead of a million six, somewhere around there.

Joan Beifuss: You’re saying that it’s not true that the city borrowed money or that someone gave the city money?

Frank Gianotti: You have to have -- you borrow in anticipation of taxes, collection of taxes. You borrow, and this was not that type of resolution as I remember. You borrow in anticipation of the sale of bonds. Outside of that, I just don’t know where you borrow money. Now one time, when we said to the banks, we did, we were in bad shape in 1968, in my opinion. And I think the comptroller, (muffled) would agree. But I remember getting up a list with Gerald Moore, of all the property owned by the city of Memphis not being devoted to a public purpose, and if necessary we would use that as collateral if this happened.

Joan Beifuss: Oh really?

Frank Gianotti: Yeah.

Joan Beifuss: This was early when you first came in? It was really that bad? (muffled)

Frank Gianotti: One of the first things we got on my desk was when you’re going to pay the government $300,000 or $400,000 for all these buses they had bought without allocating the money for. I think the whole thing was a million or so.

Joan Beifuss: You mean MTA buses?

Frank Gianotti: Yeah, yeah. Under the federal funds and the city had to borrow the money. You know the transit authority couldn’t borrow it. So, they borrowed the money, and we had to scratch to get the money to pay that back.

Carol Lynn Yellin: And you had to operate on a budget that was -- was that the thing, a new budget couldn’t be prepared, or wouldn’t go into effect until July and your first six months you were operating on a…wasn’t that what when we talked with Gerald Moore.
Frank Gianotti: Well, the new government is a fiscal period and then changed in there from January to July, and then there were some problems in connection with collection of tax monies. A number of years ago we used to give a discount, oh I think one or two percent, if you paid your money prior to September 1, if you paid it in July or something you got a 1% or 2% whatever it was. Well, of course when they changed that law, then all these big lending companies, there was no incentive. They’d keep their money until September 1. So the city for a period in there was really hard up, and that’s I remember I think that’s when we got up that list. And the city does own a lot of property that is for sale at the right price. We own a lot of property down on Adams or Washington.

Joan Beifuss: (muffled)

Frank Gianotti: Oh yeah. The first property we were going to locate the City Hall was down on Adams, and they own a lot of property on Adams, and they own practically everything from Third Street down to Fourth Street on Washington. (muffled) where the old Public Works building is, the parking lot, own all of that. Yeah, the city was in bad shape in my opinion in January of 1968, and the budget at the hospital as I remember was involved in some way. Either under-anticipated or over-anticipated, something like that. It was short, real short.

Joan Beifuss: Let me go back again to that -- or if we’ve gotten the wrong information on that some civic-minded person gave the city $50,000, or loaned the city $50,000 or something to pay the initial sanitation strike raise.

Frank Gianotti: I just don’t remember that. Henry Loeb would know, but…did he tell you that?

Joan Beifuss: No. I can’t remember -- you’re about number 180.

Frank Gianotti: Really?

Joan Beifuss: 180 that we’ve talked to. We’ve kind of lost.

Carol Lynn Yellin: Have we talked to that many?

Joan Beifuss: We’ve talked to that many.

Frank Gianotti: Then you really have done some work.

Joan Beifuss: Yeah, and if you want to come to the movies we have what, like 50 hours of all the television tape from the whole period, if you want to spend the night at the movies.

Carol Lynn Yellin: We said that we didn’t know what we were getting into. We did find that…
Joan Beifuss: It got bigger as we’ve gone along.

Carol Lynn Yellin: We found once we would, even like right now, we should talk to Francis Turner perhaps, you know. And we haven’t talked to Claude Armour. I realize that maybe we should talk to them.

Joan Beifuss: Every time you talk to someone there’s always…

Carol Lynn Yellin: You keep finding someone else.

Frank Gianotti: You pick up other people, yeah.

Carol Lynn Yellin: And we were trying to get as full a picture as we could. So this could get us into, you know, we would talk to a minister, and then we’d say, well so-and-so, and then we would talk to someone who was on the union involved in the local union, and they would say, well you should ask Mr. Wurf, he’s the only one that would know.

Joan Beifuss: Oh, you can’t imagine all the people…

Carol Lynn Yellin: And we still hope to go to Columbia, Missouri, and talk with Frank Holloman.

Frank Gianotti: Well, he was right in the thick of the whole thing.

Carol Lynn Yellin: But I think maybe we are about to the wind-up point. Do you have any other thoughts.

Frank Gianotti: Let me see if I can get you those cases, if you really need them.

END OF RECORDING.