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NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: Paula Mascioli

NAME OF INTERVIEWER: Cristina Pietropaolo

NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER: Travis Tomchuk

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ABSTRACT

Paula Mascioli is the granddaughter of Leopoldo (Leo) Mascioli and the great-niece of Antonio (Tony) Mascioli who were both interned on June 10, 1940. At the time of their internment both

were successful businessmen and active community members in Timmins, Ontario. They were both interned at Petawawa and released on February 18, 1941, but Tony was re-arrested in September of 1941 and detained for an additional month. Like other families, the internment experience was rarely discussed in the Mascioli home. It was only after her father Daniel's death that Paula discovered a box of letters and documents from that time that her father had kept. Through the letters she was able to learn even more about the traumatic experience that her family members went through. Some of what she learned revolved around her father, who at 27 had to take responsibility for the businesses, employees, as well as try to organize a defence for his father and uncle. These letters, which were heavily censored, offer a glimpse of camp life through the care packages received, the work details, the food, the exercise program, comedy acts discussed, in addition to recounting the severe boredom endured. The documents also speak of political as well as media manipulations.

INTERVIEW

PM: Paula Mascioli, interviewee

CP: Cristina Pietropaolo, interviewer

TT: Travis Tomchuk, videographer

[Title screen]

[Fades in at 00:00:10]

CP: [Unclear] Um...if you could tell me your name and where you born? A little bit about your family?

PM: I'm Paula Mascioli and I was born in Timmins, Ontario. And, um...my parents were also born in Timmins, but it was my grandparents that—uh, both sets—that came over from Italy

and, uh, and settled there eventually. Um...and, uh, my grandfather Leo Mascioli and my great uncle Tony Mascioli, um, are the two men I'm gonna talk about today. And, uh, they had, uh, quite a history of, uh, working their way up to Northern Ontario, uh, starting with nothing, uh, and working very hard and having a lot of foresight and, uh, in the long term building, uh, quite a, a successful business, or businesses, throughout Northern Ontario.

CP: And where in Italy did, did your family come from?

PM: On my father's side it was in Cucolo, which is, uh, in Abruzzo. That's about 100 miles east of Rome.

CP: Okay. And your mom was also—

PM: My mum's—

CP: —Italian?

PM: Yes, of Italian descent. Her parents, uh, were from Northern Italy. The mother from near, uh, Turin. And the father, my grand—other grandfather, from near Venice.

CP: And...when did you first—uh, you said you didn't know your grandfather—um, but when did you first learn about your grandfather and great-uncle's internment?

PM: I just somehow knew growing up. Uh, it was mentioned, uh, that they were interned and— but it was never discussed. Uh, there were no details discussed. Uh, it was just sort of a...generally known, but...not really referred to beyond that. Um, so...I really only learnt a lot more after discovering documents, uh, pertaining to the internment, um, that my father had

kept. And, uh, by reading through them I became knowledgeable about what happened to both of them.

CP: And can you tell me about how your dad got all these, uh, these documents and...

PM: Well, my dad was very heavily involved. Um, he was a young man; he was only 27 years old when his father and his great-uncle were interned, um...on June 10, 1940. And literally overnight he became responsible for all of his father's and great-uncle's businesses. He overnight became responsible for all the employees, which numbered in the hundreds. And at the same time he was re—became responsible for trying to build a defense to get the two of them released. So, just overnight he became hugely responsible and involved.

CP: Um, and the businesses that he took over, these are your grandfather and great-uncle's businesses. Can you tell me about what they did?

PM: Oh, they did a variety of things. Um, starting out of course [bell heard in the background] things were, were humbler. Um, when they first worked their way up to, uh, Timmins, uh, they were involved with the mines and assisting, um, in having—hiring men, bringing men over from Italy with their families and with the promise that these men would have employment, uh, with the mines once they got here. So that's how things started. And then really my grandfather saw—at this point my great-uncle wasn't there yet. My grandfather got there about, I'd say about four years before him. And my grandfather saw that there was really very little in the way of provisions or entertainment in the Porcupine Camp. So he then—the next step was he started up a general store and a bakery. And then for entertainment, which there was none, he started bringing in movies and charging 25 cents per person to watch the movie on kitchen chairs in a back room somewhere. [Smiles] And over the years, ah, he built numerous movie theatres throughout Northern Ontario. Ah, he built bowling alleys. He built hotels. Um, he had,

uh, his construction company, Mascioli Construction. And, uh, his businesses went beyond Timmins eventually on to North Bay and other smaller communities within the north, Huntsville and then eventually Sault Ste. Marie.

[00:05:09]

CP: Okay. And...I forgot to ask, just to back up for a second, do you know what year your grandfather arrived in Canada?

PM: In Canada? I would put it at about 1890—let's see I had that written down [looks down at paper on desk]—about 1894. He was born in 1876, he, uh, apparently came over when he was 18, landed in Boston, uh, as poor as can be. Uh, worked there doing whatever he could find. He was a, a bootstrap, he was a dishwasher, he was a construction worker. Uh, then he got wind that, um, workers were urgently needed in Canada. So he worked his way, uh, up to, uh, Nova Scotia and, uh, again was recruiting men for the coalmines there. But eventually, um, heard that [Guglielmo] Marconi was looking for workers to help, uh, put up his wireless towers in Newfoundland. So he got involved in that project. [Long pause] From there, uh, then eventually he went—worked his way back to Ont—well to Ontario, to Cobalt, because Cobalt was in the midst of a huge silver boom at the time...and stayed there until Cobalt started to [gestures up and down with her hands and arms] quiet down. And then around 1910, hearing about the discovery of gold in the Porcupine, uh, made his way up to Timmins. And that's an interesting story how he got there. Apparently it was March, and March in this country, especially Northern Ontario is still frigid, and as the story goes he took the train from Cobalt north as far as it went, which was Matheson. And Matheson [gesturing with her left hand back and forth] is I would say about 40 miles outside of Timmins. And from that point on, he walked and on foot [smiles] into the Porcupine Camp. [Smiles] And from what I hear, that that was such a cold [says “cold” slowly] and long [says “long” slowly] and uncomfortable [says “uncomfortable” slowly]

trip. He never forgot that. And he was known to even wear long johns in the summer [smiles and gives slight laugh] from that point on 'cause he never wanted to be cold again.

CP: That's a pretty dramatic entrance. [Laughs]

PM: Yes it was. [Nods]

CP: And at that point, somewhere along the line, he was able to sponsor his brother Tony to—

PM: Well no, what happened was that, um, uh...he had actually gone back to Italy in 19—let's see, bear with me [looks through papers on the table]. He had gone back to Italy in 1904 to marry, um, the woman that he had grown up with and stayed there till 1906. Uh, then I guess came back with her and headed to Cobalt. Um...then in 1914—they were now at this point in Timmins—uh, she got very ill and he brought her back to Cucolo, to Italy, in the hopes that she would recuperate. But she never did, she passed away. And it's thought that she probably died of TB [tuberculosis]. Uh, at that point in 1914, upon his return—he buried her there—that's when his brother, uh, Tony, uh, decided to join him, and came to Canada at that point.

CP: And so they began to work together?

PM: Yes. [Nods]

CP: Um...and just to speed up a little now. Um, what year were—or...when Italy declared...war, um, what were their—do you know what their reactions would have been? Like did your father ever talk about...

PM: No. [Shakes head]

CP: No.

PM: No, the only thing that I always hear is, is from other relatives that of course everyone was extraordinarily upset. Uh, they were, uh, very angry, because they felt these charges were unfounded. Um, there is, as I say, instantaneous and, and huge stress immediately on my dad, um, and his, his sister who was living at the time. And, um, of course nobody knew anything at first. It was weeks before they, they found much out. And during those weeks they were trying desperately to get information. I know that my grandfather was apparently picked up in Toronto, and brought to the CNE [Canadian National Exhibition] grounds. And, uh, my aunt, my dad's sister, apparently went to the CNE grounds hoping to see him, and—but he had already left. And been—he had left for Petawawa.

CP: He wasn't kept at the CNE for very long then? They—

PM: I don't know how long, but by the time she got there, he had just left. So of course there was bitter disappointment over that. Uh, my great-uncle Tony, on the other hand, was picked up in Tmmms. And, uh, I've spoken with his son Norman, who, uh, remembers, uh, Tony being taken to the police station. And Norman and his mum going to the police station but not being allowed to see him. They—Norman said he could see him through the window, but they weren't allowed to see him or speak to him. They were sent away.

[00:10:28]

CP: And I guess, uh, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], did they... eventually inform your grandfather's family about where he was being taken or why he was taken there?

PM: Well, they were eventually, the detail of which I, I don't know, but what I did find, um, in, uh, some of the legal documents, uh, was, uh, verbatim what was written in the Order of Detention. That obviously would have either been sent to my father or his legal counsel that he immediately hired. And it said the following [reads from document], "Representations have been made that you are a member of the fascist party; a subversive organization, which is opposed to the interests of Canada. In view of this it would appear that you are disloyal to Canada."

[Long pause]

CP: And that was...

PM: That was it.

CP: ...it. Um, where was he interned? And he was in...

PM: In Petawawa.

CP: And for how long?

PM: It was a total of nine months. Uh, they—he was picked up June 10th, 1940 and he was actually released February 18th, 1941. Uh, the order for his release was issued on February 14, but it was a few days yet before they were actually freed.

CP: Mm hmm.

PM: Now, my great uncle Tony, on the other hand, uh, was re-arrested, uh, in September 1941 for further questioning. Uh, but he was only detained, uh, for one month, and then he was released unconditionally after that.

CP: And it was the same reason that they'd given earlier for the second arrest?

PM: [Nods] That's what I've read. Is they just wanted to question him further based on the original charges.

CP: Okay. Uh, I know you have a lot letters back and forth from your dad and your grandfather. Um, so I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about your sense about what life was like for him in the camp? And for your great-uncle too?

PM: Yeah...well, the correspondence was mainly between my grandfather and my dad, and my grandfather representing both himself and his brother. My dad representing, uh, you know, himself, his sister, and his sister's children. Uh, so...what I—first things is that the letters were censored. Um, they weren't allowed to discuss any business matters in their letters. Um, there was reference made to that effect. And I guess at cert—in certain letters they tried to indirectly mention certain business issues and those letters were always returned and had to be altered before they could be resent out. Um, from what I gather, um, my grandfather and great-uncle were, were well enough taken care of. I mean, they weren't, uh, uncomfortable by any means, but they were horribly bored. And numerous times he talked about the monotony being insufferable. [Long pause] But in terms of, of, being fed, uh, gosh, they had care packages sent to them that appeared almost weekly. And, um, uh, the story goes that the Italian men did their own cooking, uh, from the care packages that were sent to them. And apparently the guards liked their cooking so much, the guards wanted to eat with them. [Laughs]

CP: Um, and so, cooking became kind of the social activity? Do you know—I mean, you said they were bored—but...was there any way do you know that they entertained each other, themselves? [Chuckles]

PM: Yeah, what I read is for one thing that my grandfather would lead exercise, um, not classes per se, but he would make everybody exercise daily. 'Cause they had to stay fit and they had to stay well. So he was the initiative behind that. And then he wrote to my dad too about comedy skits that some of the other, uh, internees would put on. And wrote about how, how quite clever and funny, uh, these, these men were.

CP: Did he ever talk about maybe just the Italian internees were together? Did they ever...um, associate with other internees?

PM: Uh, of non-Italian origin? Apparently not.

CP: Okay.

PM: Uh, the Germans that were interned, I was told, kept to themselves. Um, I don't know if this is hearsay or based on any truth or not, but whatever work that the internees were asked to do apparently the Germans didn't want to work. They said [raises both hands up in the air], "We're prisoners of war, we don't need to work." [Smiles and shrugs] But that's the story.

CP: Um, how many—do you know how many letters your grandfather was allowed to send out or receive? Was there a limitation?

PM: It appeared that it was approximately—he would write approximately two a week and receive about two a week. I mean they—that was their only means of communication, so there

was diligence on both sides, of, of really trying to keep in touch. But the letters weren't lengthy. And they were basically the same thing, Everybody's fine, we're fine, glad that you're fine, we're bored, you know, we can't wait to see you. [Nods and shrugs]

CP: And was any of the family on the outside [noise of drill in the background] ever allowed to visit or...

PM: Apparently, uh, Tony's wife, um, according to Norman, uh, did go from time to time to visit. But I didn't see any references to that in the letters. But that's, uh, what N—[shrugs] you know that doesn't mean it didn't happen. But apparently she did. Uh, now my dad, on the other hand, um, tried to, um [noise of drill in background], attend their hearing in July and my father wasn't allowed in. Um, there were other businessmen, um, from Timmins, who did go down for that trial to be character witnesses and they were allowed in, but my father wasn't.???

CP: Okay. Um, can you tell me a bit about the connection with Roy Thomson????

PM: Well, Roy Thomson at the time had the local newspaper *The Timmins Daily Press*, as well as the local radio station. And, uh, he and my grandfather, um, eventually became friends, um, over the years.?

?

CP: And he wrote that, that letter for, um—the handwritten letter that you have, saying that he could appear in court????

PM: Yes, it was a letter that he, he wrote in his handwriting to my father, I believe it was in July of 1940, saying that he'd be happy to attend the trial [noise of drill in the background], to be a character witness, and if my dad felt that that would be useful that he'd be there. [Nods]

CP: Okay.

PM: He also later on, I guess, for the trial itself, had, um, like a, a legal, um, statement of declaration written up [gestures to size of letter with hands], uh, that just, uh, backing my grandfather and his brother's good character.??

CP: Um...

TT: Can you just hang on a sec... [Says while camera fades out]

?

[Fades out at 00:17:51]??

[Fades in at 00:17:52]

TT: Okay.??

CP: Uh, can you tell a little bit more—are you able to tell me a little bit more about the camp, in terms of like wh—or rather what kinds of things did your grandfather ask for in the letters? Like, care packages, what were in them???

PM: Oh gosh, [smiles], uh, roasted chickens, uh, cans of beans, and cans of tomato, uh, fresh fruit, boxes of grapefruit, of oranges, of honeydew melons, uh, cigarettes. Cigarettes were a big deal...uh, a regular item. Um, and cigars. And sometimes the odd, uh, bit of clothing was requested. ??

CP: Were there things that they tended to request more often than not or things that he said please don't send anymore of that or...

PM: Well from time to time he'd say [holds hands out in front], "We have enough. You know, we've got quite a, a stock of provisions. So we're okay for a while." But then, you know, within a week there was another request that came in so, I think they were feeding the camp. [Smiles] Um, but yes they would often request—well cigarettes were a regular item and, um, fresh fruit seemed to be something that they really wanted.

CP: And I guess it would have been who putting—who would have put the care packages together?

PM: It was, uh, Tony's wife it appeared from the letters, uh, that did the pre—you know, the majority of the care packages.

CP: And do the letters or, uh, any old talks of your dad give any indication of what things were like at home...while they were in the camp?

PM: Uh, I think my dad tried to keep things very positive. That everybody was well, you know, somebody had a cold. Or you know, he'd report on that. But I think he just tried to keep everything upbeat...and positive.

CP: Um, I wonder if you could tell me a little bit more about the whole legal process that your dad was involved with, in terms of, um, when he decided to get a lawyer? And...like...what happened? How did that start?

PM: Well, from what I can gather, uh, he must have, uh, sought legal counsel almost immediately. Um, he hired a firm in Toronto, who then had agents in Ottawa—

CP: Mm hmm.

PM: —and also in Timmins.

[00:20:14]

CP: And things just kind of took off from there?

PM: Yeah, and I believe that the firm in Toronto was like lead counsel. [Gestures with hands]

CP: Yeah.

PM: And if they needed some information or something done in Ottawa, then they had their agent here who was also, uh, a lawyer, uh, that did whatever they had to do here, and the same in Timmins.

CP: Would the lawyers have ever have gone to meet with your grandfather? Or...

PM: They attended the trial. And actually—

CP: And that's—

PM: Sorry?

CP: Go ahead.

PM: They attended the trial, and there was actually even a second trial that was allowed. Um, the first trial was in July of 1940. The second trial that was allowed was in December of 1940. And that was only allowed because further investigation had taken place since the first trial.

And based on the, uh, information that had been gathered since the first trial, uh, the Ministry of Justice was going to allow a second hearing. So naturally the lawyer was, was present at that as well. And I believe my dad was allowed in at that one.

CP: Okay. Um, I remember you telling me that some of the...evidence they had stacked against your, your dad, and, and your great-uncle was to do with membership?

PM: Yeah, um, [moves forward in her chair looking through papers] that I really had to piece together. [Folds hands together in front of her with elbows resting on table] Uh, it appears that—well for one thing we'll start with Tony my great-uncle. Um...his grasp of, of English, both written and spoken, was better than Leo's. And, um, he acted as an intermediary between the Italian Consulate in, in Ontario, and a lot of the, uh, new Italians that had just immigrated to Timmins, where they required help with legal paperwork, with visas or any other legal documents. Uh, Tony assisted these people, in guiding them through the process, because they didn't speak English. So he was in that role for many years. And, um, now my grandfather Leo was not, as I say, he wasn't as comfortable in English, and apparently didn't write English. But Tony enjoyed that role. But nonetheless, both of them were prominent men in town and, uh, and in the Italian community as well. So...it was the Italian Consulate that actually contacted Leo and Tony to see if they would distribute these *fascio* membership cards throughout the community and collect fees. Uh, both Tony and Leo, uh, said that they were led to believe that this would be like a social club. Since there was at the time no other Italian organization, uh, in existence at the time in Timmins, uh, they were told well this is an opportunity to bring the Italian community together. Uh, also an opportunity for them to possibly make contacts, maybe get, you know, additional work through this organization. It would be sort of a mutual beneficial society. And because Leo and Tony were, were prominent and well known, of course they were naturally selected to be the vehicle to, you know, reach the people. And this was initially in 1934 when they were just mailed, um, fascist membership cards, directly to them. And, uh, apparently Leo, uh, had no interest in it whatsoever, um, and just ignored it. Uh, Tony wasn't

that interested either, uh, but apparently he was approached by the secretary of the North Bay branch of the Fascist, uh, Party. And, uh, this secretary, his name was [Italo] Gioia, I guess he was instructed by the Italian Consulate to try to get something going in Timmins. So Tony actually did assist Gioia in organizing one meeting in 1934. But apparently it was very poorly attended. And they really didn't have much success in, in getting people interested. People didn't want to pay the annual dues. Uh, people couldn't be bothered. So by 1936, by the end of 1936, apparently there was no longer any active fascist activity at all in Timmins. There was only one other meeting that had been held after that 1934 meeting, which was in the summer of 1936, when Gioia came back up to Timmins. Uh, it was really supposed to be a public meeting, where all the Italians were invited to come, because he wanted to speak about Italy's recent victory in Ethiopia. So it wasn't really promoted as a fascist meeting. But something curious happened soon after. There's an Italian newspaper in Toronto, called *Il Bolletino*. And soon after that, that summer meeting of 1936, this article appeared, which they suspect was written by Gioia himself, that greatly exaggerated the attendance at this meeting and said there was a big band playing and there hundreds of people there, and there was all this great enthusiasm, and speeches given, when apparently it was this same pitiful attendance that they had experienced in 1934. [Gestures to the left and right with hands] So the suspicion was that Gioia was trying to again trying stimulate interest by writing this article and exaggerating the events of that meeting. And after that everything just fell apart. Now...however, the Italian Consulate still continued annually to mail to Tony all these membership cards to distribute. And people's names were already written on them. And what happened was that the RCMP found that these discarded cards in his desk; these, these cards that he had never bothered or was unable to, to distribute or collect fees for. And this is what was incriminating. Now one time when Leo and Tony did actually use the cards was in 1938, um, their mother was dying. And they wanted to go back to Italy to see her. The Italian Consul General apparently advised my grandfather Leo to bring with him a fascist membership card because he said it would make traveling in Italy easier while he was there. That perhaps may gain him quicker or better access into things. So he and

Tony, on the Consul General's advice, did acquire two cards in 1938, brought them on their trip and found out that they were useless. [Long pause] So that really was the extent of the activity.

[00:27:34]

CP: But clearly, I guess, that was enough for the RCMP to—an excuse to go in. Did they ever talk about any other evidence against them or is there any record of that in the papers?

PM: In the papers?

CP: In the documents that you have?

PM: Um, really just a couple of letters that Tony wrote to the Consul General when he was outgoing, he was going back to Italy. And really there was nothing really incriminating other than, you know, he was in his letter flattering the outgoing Consul General and speaking very patriotically about Italy. So that was again viewed as being disloyal.

CP: Oh, and I almost forgot the, um, certificate that he received from the King, you mentioned that that was...

PM: Yeah, my grandfather in 1932, um [pauses to look through papers], he received, um—yeah, I wrote that down somewhere. It's called Cavaliere of the Order of the King of Italy, which really sounds very special but apparently it wasn't. Um, this took Leo by surprise. It was a certificate granted to him by the King of Italy, not by [Benito] Mussolini, uh, and Leo suspected that it was because of his contributions towards, uh, Italy's participation in World War One, and also because he helped an awful lot of the Italians throughout Northern Ontario and he feels that because of his charitable acts and donations that he was awarded that. But that was viewed with suspicion...by the government. But, uh, it went on to say too in the, the legal defense that

apparently these certificates were awarded more frequently then one was led to believe and was usually on the recommendation of some consulate authority in Canada.

CP: And I suppose with, um, the, the Consul's connection to the *fascio* that was...how they surmised that possibly—or justified that the certificate was suspicious, I guess?

PM: Perhaps so.

[00:29:49]

CP: It's all kind of—um...when was he—you said he was interned for nine months and—

PM: They were both interned for nine months and then Tony again...

CP: Yeah.

PM: ...um, was, uh, arrested again the following September. So September '41, but only kept for a month. And he was not sent back to Petawawa. He was kept in jail in Haileybury until he was finally released unconditionally.

CP: And Leo was he re—released with any conditions or...

PM: I'm not of aware of there being any conditions. Um, what I did discover in one of the letters, um, from my father to Leo, upon Leo's release, where my dad was making arrangements where they would be picking them up, I believe in, in Petawawa—or Pembroke, um, that they would under order have to register nationally. There was some kind of a national registry that was going to be required of them as soon as they were released.

CP: Right. Um...and I guess, after he was released, did your father like keep helping him with business or did his businesses recover after being released? Do you know anything about what happened?

PM: [Nods] I—

CP: How they were affected by the whole internment?

PM: Well business-wise, I think they were okay. Um, my dad had to plead with the government and, and convince them not to take over his businesses as they had done with so many of the, uh, internees. Uh, my dad convinced that he would be able to run things, uh, according to their government standard. And the government was allowed to come in regularly to audit and to review how things were going. Um, so we were very fortunate in that respect that things weren't taken away from us as they were in many cases. Uh, although a close eye was kept on the operations. So I do believe that business got back to normal, in that respect.

CP: Okay. Um...I guess, I keep wanting to ask you questions about, uh, your dad, but you said that this was never really talked about much when you were growing up.

PM: No. [Says softly]

CP: Yeah.

PM: It's unfortunate.

CP: Yeah. Um...

PM: I know that [sighs] my mum's talked [leans forward and crosses her arms on the table] a little bit about it to me since, and talked about how my, my dad and his sister were bitter, um, about the whole thing. And, uh, that they did feel during and afterwards, some judgment and some snubbing from the non-Italian community.

CP: Mm hmm.

PM: Uh, my mom even remembers a story being told apparently by my aunt that, um, uh, it would appear to her that if people—she was downtown, people would cross the street to avoid having to come in contact with her.

CP: And was, was that during the period of internment itself do you think or after the war was over—

PM: I'm not—

CP: —did people carry over?

PM: I'm not sure, but I, I suspect that it would have carried over for some time.

CP: Mm hmm. And have you had any conversations about this with, um, I guess cousins who— or your uncle's son rather—or your great-uncle's son?

PM: Yes, with Norman I've had a few conversations with him. Yeah.

CP: And I guess that sparked an exchange of ideas or information about what happened or...

PM: Well I was particularly curious to talk to Norman because, you know, it was his dad that was interned and so he lived through it directly. [Long pause] He was young at the time though and, and he does say he doesn't recall a lot.

CP: Yeah. Um, I think that's everything that I can sort of think of right now. I'm sure I'll bug you again in a week or two. Um...

PM: Do you want to know anything about their life after internment?

CP: Yeah, I was going to ask if you could just tell us a bit about that and then if you could think of anything else that I've missed or any stories that you can think of?

PM: [Takes a drink of water] Okay. Um, well after their release, uh, according to Norman, Tony's life pretty much got back to normal. Tony apparently was fairly easy going and, uh, he took it in stride. Uh, but according to Norman, he was careful what he said afterwards. Um, my grandfather on the other hand, I know was, uh...he left Timmins. He moved away. He moved to Toronto and he never went back to Timmins to live. And the reason for that from what I've been told is that he was very disappointed, uh, that there wasn't a greater show of support for him when he needed the help. Uh, as I mentioned earlier, my grandfather sponsored a lot of men and their wives to come over from Italy. And while in Northern Ontario had helped them also out a great deal when they were there—once they were there. And now that he was in a—in need, uh, he was disappointed in the show of support. So I think that he was hurt by that and, uh, that was behind him wanting to move to Toronto.

[00:35:39]

CP: Now what did he do in Toronto?

PM: Well apparently he bought real estate. And he still did have a, a somewhat, uh, semi-active role in the businesses in Northern Ontario. Um, a few years later they started building, um, a movie theatre in Sudbury and he was commuting from Toronto to Sudbury to be actively involved in that. So he still had a hand in things, but was—had slowed down a bit, I guess.

CP: And was he involved with the Italian community in Toronto, do you know or...?

PM: I don't know. [Shakes head]

CP: If he kept in touch in Sudbury or North Bay?

PM: Well I'm sure—he obviously kept in touch with family.

CP: Yeah.

PM: Um, and you know, and friends. One interesting remark that I do recall from one of his letters to my dad was, "Say hello to our friends if we have any left."

CP: Wow.

PM: And although he wasn't allowed to say a lot in the letters, I noticed that towards the end, just before their release you can see that his frustration was mounting. And he was getting fed up. Because in the last couple of letters he finally started to...show how he was feeling. How he was, you know, just so baffled that he was in there because he had done nothing but try to, to help people his whole life and give back to the community that had given him a chance at a

better life. So in those last few letters he, he gets emotional and, and he's upset and frustrated by the whole thing.

CP: Um...you actually reminded me of something. Back up for a second. You found a document that stipulated what internees could and couldn't mention in their letters?

PM: [Nods] Mm hum.

CP: So...you said he would write about, um, the exercise and cooking and that kind of thing, but it makes me wonder what kinds of things, you know, were left out of the letters? Like what d— off the top of your head—

PM: Well if you like I can just grab it on the end of the table. [Smiles]

CP: Sure. Yeah. [Laughs]

PM: Do you want to turn it off? [Chuckles]

[Fades out at 00:37:57]

[Fades in at 00:37:59]

PM: [Removes glasses and looks down at document] —my glasses like this. Okay.

[Fades out at 00:38:01]

[Fades in at 00:38:02]

PM: Um, you had asked what some of the, um, restrictions were on letter writing.

CP: Yeah.

PM: Uh [reads from document], "Letters must not contain drawings, pictures, short hand, music, unintelligible signs or marks. And all surnames referred to must be written in full. The use of abbreviations, odd letters, or unnecessary figures is prohibited." [Looks up] I guess they're worried about codes.

CP: Mm.

PM: [Looks down and reads] Um, "Letters must not contain any reference to the operations of war, nor economic, nor political situation. Quotations from, or reference to books or poems are prohibited. And letters must be written in such a manner that the meaning of the sentences is quite clear. All cryptic remarks will be obliterated by the censor." [Looks up and smiles]

CP: Wow.

PM: Yeah, and so on. [Puts on her glasses again]

CP: Um, yup, so that kind of puts a limit on what you can and can't tell your family is happening.

PM: [Moving papers around on table while speaking] Yeah, and there were, there were a couple of letters where my grandfather said, "Well, uh, hopefully this letter will get to you. I've had to re-write it two or three times before, you know, they're gonna allow it to go out. I hope this one gets to you."

CP: Yeah.

PM: I guess they were trying to make some subtle references to business issues and they were trying to be very subtle.

CP: Mm hmm.

PM: Um, but they kept getting caught on that.

CP: Um, before I forget then, uh, the *Hush* newspaper, the article that came out while he was interned, can you talk about that?

[00:39:38]

PM: Yeah, that's an interesting little story. Um...Roy Thomson, uh, as I say, was friends with my grandfather. Um, the former mayor of Timmins, J.P. Bartleman held the mortgage on Roy Thomson's newspaper building. Apparently Bartleman wanted to re-run for mayor. And, uh, he was putting pressure on Thomson to run editorials in his newspaper to support Bartleman in his re-run for mayor. Well, Thomson wasn't in favour of Bartleman's politics, 'cause apparently when he was in, in public office the first time, a number of his, uh, council members were, uh, communists. And, uh, apparently Bartleman supported them and them him. So a lot of the people in town, which included Roy Thomson and my grandfather, were against Bartleman, uh, being re-elected as mayor. Now when Thomson, um, protested to, uh, Bartleman, saying that he did not want to publicly endorse his campaign for re-election, Bartleman threatened to, uh, call in the loan. So, uh, my grandfather Leo, uh, lent Roy the money to pay off the mortgage, to thereby free himself from any obligation to Bartleman. And, uh, so he could then, uh, support

whoever he wanted in his newspaper. Well Bartleman lost the next election and always blamed my grandfather for this. So there was always animosity between Bartleman and the Masciolis as the result of that. [Smiles] So when a number of business people, uh, from Timmins went to Petawawa to—for the July hearing to be character witnesses, um, and Bartleman found out, uh, he wrote this scathing letter which got published in the *Hush* mag—uh, newspaper. Um, saying that these men you know had a lot of nerve; that they were trying to put themselves above the law; they were trying to make themselves, uh, bigger than the RCMP and, and greater than the government. Which all they were trying to do is just show their support for Tony and Leo. So, uh, then he referred to my grandfather as a communist, which was ironic, because Bartleman had had council members that were communists and known to be, uh, and then said that, uh, my grandfather was the now owner of the *Timmins Daily Press*. Well Roy Thomson under oath denied that. Um, but nonetheless this, this very negative article that, uh, Bartleman wrote, was sent to the Ministry of Justice, to try to build a stronger case against their release. So it was a nice little piece of propaganda. [Smiles]

CP: Yeah. Um, yeah. It's almost unbelievable...almost. Um, I also wanted to—and I think you, you mentioned this at the beginning of the interview, how you found all these papers and everything in your mother's basement. But what—this is kind of the first—or this is what spurred you to find out more?

PM: Well sure. It was, uh—I'd always, you know, been curious, uh, to know more about our family history because all my grandparents passed away before I was born. I really kind of missed having grandparents. And I think I was maybe subconsciously looking for a deeper sense of roots, a deeper sense of family history. And this may not have been a conscious thought when I was younger, but you know as I got older it sort of rose, bubbled [gestures with fingers up in the air] to the surface. And, uh, I started, you know, asking more questions and, and

wanting to know more. And then of course when I, I found this box of documents, uh, I was intrigued. Here was history right before me [nods]...which nobody talked about.

CP: Yeah. And I guess your dad kept everything super organized which made it a bit...

PM: Fairly organized. You know, I still spent hours and hours and hours going through it. Um...and organizing it, maybe in a way that I preferred, but yeah, there was—my dad kept a lot. It's curious that he kept a lot. I'm not sure why he did.

CP: Given that I suppose he didn't talk about it very much when you were growing up or...

PM: Not at all. Other than it happened. And that it was too bad that it happened.

CP: What do you think the redress a few years ago—um, what do you think that your grandfather or your dad would have said or how they might have reacted to that?

PM: To which, uh...

CP: By [Brian] Mulroney, a few years ago, when he kind of apologized [unclear]?

PM: Well, it's—

CP: Do you have any idea? [Laughs]

PM: It's hard to say. [Smiles]

CP: Yeah, of course.

PM: It's hard to say. Um, my dad was a man of few words. So, you often had to guess how he felt. Uh, apparently Leo was much the same...um...in terms of personal issues. [Gestures hands toward her chest] That he kept pretty—that pretty close to him. So, it'd be difficult to answer that question.

CP: I thought I'd try anyway. Um, are there any other stories about Leo or Tony or your dad dealing with, with, with your grandfather's internment that you can think—that you'd like to share?

PM: Well...should you shut this off for a sec? Let me just... [Says while camera fades out]

[Fades out at 00:45:59]

[Fades in at 00:46:00]

CP: Again before I forget, um, about Sandy and the Algonquin Captain of...?

PM: Yeah, her father Keith, um, was apparently a, a Captain and the head of the Algonquin Regiment and, uh, served in the, in the Second World War. Um, of course he—I, from what I've gathered, he was quite indignant with, uh, the internment of, of Leo and Tony. Knowing that it was completely unfounded that they should be a threat to national security. Um, but, um, I gathered from some of the letters between my father and Leo that for the longest time Keith wasn't allowed to write to, to Leo. Uh, it was viewed as a conflict of interest. Now—though he did submit a statement of declaration, um, supporting, uh, Leo and Tony's character and their views on fascism. Um, and he did submit that, as, uh, a statement of support.

CP: Um, actually I just have another question about the, the, the hearing, the trial. Was there—
'cause you said that Leo was more comfortable speaking in Italian...

PM: Mm hmm.

CP: ...rather than in English. So in court, do you have any id—was it in English or was there an
interpreter or...

PM: I, I'm not sure. Uh, there were some scribbled notes that my father took down, um, that I
strained to read, uh, of what the judge said, what Leo said. Uh, it appeared to me it was all in
English.

CP: Okay.

PM: Um, but if it went through an interpreter I, I don't know. I mean, I think Leo could get by.
[Nods]

CP: Yeah.

PM: But he wasn't as at ease or as, as fluent as Tony.

CP: Yeah. I don't think comfort it would have been something that they would have wanted.
They wouldn't have wanted to make him feel comfortable in the courtroom presumably?

PM: No, no quite the opposite. [Smiles and nods]

CP: Yeah. Um, yeah and anything that you've scanned in your notes there about, uh, things I've missed. Um, other stories about Leo and Tony?

PM: Yeah, what did we mention earlier?

CP: There was the Algonquin bit...

PM: Mm hmm.

CP: ...and...

PM: There was something else. [Smiles]

CP: We talked about your dad's involvement and how...it happened really quickly.

PM: Well dad had, you know, started working with his father in the business interest, so he wasn't, you know, just coming in from left field [gesturing with her hands raised and swings them from right to left], um, but to suddenly be responsible for all the businesses and all the employees, plus pulling together a defense, was pretty overwhelming. And I guess it comes as no surprise that when all this was over, uh, soon thereafter, my father got very sick.

CP: Mm. [Long pause] And this was after he—before he moved to Toronto or...

PM: No—

CP: Or, sorry, your father.

PM: My father, yeah. [Nods]

CP: Yeah. [Long pause] Yeah. How—um, I wonder if you could talk a little bit more about your mum's reaction to some of this? 'Cause I know you said you've been speaking with her a little bit about it, but is there anything...

PM: Well you know, she's, she's really quite amazed at what my dad, uh, was saddled with at just 27 years old.

CP: Yeah.

PM: And, you know, is, is really quite, I guess feels very sad for him.

CP: Yeah.

PM: As do I actually. Um, of what, uh, he had to do and, and, how well he did it. [Nods] Um, but what a strain it must have been and what a worry. Because of course the, the greatest fear was that if Leo and Tony were found guilty, they'd be deported.

CP: Right...right.

PM: And then the family would be...split up. So I'm sure that was a huge, you know, huge worry that weighed on them. Even though they may have all sorts of assurances from their legal counsel that it would be okay. You really don't know until it's all said and done.

[00:50:17]

CP: Mm hmm. Um, the notice of release was one thing.

PM: [Nods] Right, right. And both times, um—yes, what I found was a telegram addressed to my dad from their legal counsel in Toronto, saying that they had just been notified from the Minister of Justice that Tony and Leo were being released. And, uh, the second time that Tony was released, again it came in the form of a telegram from the legal counsel to my father.

CP: Okay.

PM: So yeah, they were advised ahead of time.

CP: Okay.

PM: Oh, and another interesting tidbit is the thing about the government charging them for—

CP: Yes.

PM: —uh, how did the word it? Uh...assistance in running their affairs. [Smiles and nods] Yes, I came across a bill, um, that, uh, Leo was charged, um, by the government for, uh, the government's management of their affairs during their internment for almost 2000 dollars. Which, you know, was, was a lot of money back then.

CP: Wow. [Laughs]

PM: Yeah. Add insult to injury.

CP: Yup.

PM: Mm hmm.

CP: Yeah.

PM: I remember you telling me of similar stories, but the amounts weren't quite so high.

CP: No, not anywh—nothing that I found, anyway, nothing quite so high. Um, some were eight dollars, some two, maybe 20 was the highest that I found so far, but nothing like that, that's...

PM: Yeah.

CP: Yeah.

PM: Major. Yeah.

CP: Um, I'm think I've...finished with my questions.

PM: Okay.

CP: But again, if anything else, anything else you can think of that you'd like to share?

PM: Well we've covered a lot. Um, I think—I hope I've made it clear what, what, what their involvement was.

CP: Mm hmm.

PM: Uh, what little there was, uh, with the—or fascist activity in Timmins. Leo's was nothing. Tony's was just those two meetings and sort of being mailed these cards continuously to distribute, which nobody was really interested in.

CP: Yeah.

PM: Uh, 'cause I thought that was key, 'cause that would have been the reason why they were arrested in the first place.

CP: Yeah.

PM: Um...so, uh, it was important to get those facts clear. I think that's pretty well everything...

CP: Okay.

PM: ...at least on, on my part.

CP: [Gives slight laugh]

PM: [Smiles and nods]

[Fades to out at 00:53:03]

??

[Fades in at 00:53:04]

PM: [Already speaking as camera fades in] —maybe know any more about, uh— [Speaking as camera fades out]

[Fades to out at 00:53:06]

[Fades in at 00:53:08]

TT: Okay, it's rolling.

PM: Um, there was a lawyer in, uh—that was interned with Leo and Tony at the same time. Um, who's last name was [N.F.A.] Scandiffio. Apparently he was a, a pretty successful lawyer in Toronto. Uh, they became apparently good friends during their internment. And my mom tells me that my grandfather and my dad, uh, continued to retain Scandiffio's services, uh, long after, uh, they were released. [Nods]

CP: Do you know if your grandfather kept in touch or would have kept in touch with any of the other internees?

PM: I don't know. Scandiffio, yes. [Nods]

CP: Yes.

PM: Uh, he was also apparently friends with, uh, [James] Franceschini, uh, during the internment. Uh, 'cause I remember that name popping up. I'd hear that name from time to time. My mother mentioned the name. Norman mentioned the name. Um, and then ironically I happened to know the Franceschini's granddaughter here in Ottawa. So it's a small world. So what happened after the internment, I don't know there. But I do know that with [Vincenzo] Scappatura they did stay in touch 'cause they, they used him for legal counsel afterwards, along with the firm that assisted them throughout the, uh, internment.

CP: Who you said...were already...

PM: They probably already were—

CP: Yeah.

PM: —uh, being used by, by Leo, uh, beforehand. I would suspect so. [Nods]

CP: Okay.

[Fades to out at 00:54:55]

[Fades in at 00:54:57]

CP: Um...[camera zooms in slightly] so how old was he when he was interned? And what kind of work did he do in the camp?

PM: Uh, well Leo was 64 when he was interned and Tony was 51. Um, apparently Leo and Franceschini, another internee, were put in charge of the lumber crew. And, uh, uh, he did— Leo did mention in one of his letters to dad that during the winter months he didn't have to do any work outside because he was a senior. Um, but overall though he found it very monotonous and, and, and the time very long. [Nods]

CP: And the letters were they—they weren't all—were they in English, Italian?

PM: The majority were in Italian. There were a few that appeared to be written towards the beginning of his internment in English. Um, but the handwriting is different, uh, on a lot of these letters, so—but the signature always the same. So what I gathered from that is that Leo had whoever was available that day to—he would dictate a letter to that person would write

that letter and then he would always sign it. 'Cause the signature never varied but the contents of the letter, the script for that did.

CP: Okay. And was it only lumberyard work that he did in the camps or was he assigned other work as well?

PM: He probably was.

CP: Yeah.

PM: Uh, Norman speaks about them doing roadwork and digging ditches and that kind of thing. Um, it's just the lumber, uh, the lumber work was referred to in one of the documents I read.

CP: Okay.

[Fades to out at 00:56:42]

[End of interview]