

**Subject: Rosemary**  
**Date: November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011**  
**Interviewer: Milli Lake**  
**Edited by: Kasmira Hall and Katie Bass**

**NOTE: This is not a transcript. This document comprises interview notes from the interview conducted with 'Rosemary' in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, on November 5th, 2012. We hope to provide a direct transcript in Spanish and English as soon as resources become available.**

**Tell us your name and where you work.**

Rosemary. I work at GRC BuenaVista.

**What kind of work do you do at the factory?**

We make basic T-shirts and sweaters. It depends what we are working on. Currently it's sweaters and I'm attaching the zippers.

**What other kinds of tasks do you have to do when you are not working on the sweaters?**

In this specific case my responsibility is to make the neck arc.

**How many people work in your factory?**

It used to be 640 employees, but now we have 70 or 60 more employees.

**So the factory hired 60 more employees?**

No, they just moved people around from the other factories

**Why did they move people around?**

I have been working with the company for 11 months since February. The rumor I heard was something about balance.

**Do you know who the goods are for that you produce? Are they for a particular company or multiple companies?**

We work with Russell Athletics.

**Is your factory owned by Russell or somebody else?**

It is owned by Fruit of the Loom.

**Can you tell me what a typical day is like at the maquila for you? What time you get up and what your normal process is?**

It's dangerous to go to the factory from my house. I wake up at 4am. Then set up all the things for my daughters, at 5:10 or 5:15 I have to get to the bus station.

**And then what? What time do you get to work?**

The transportation is very dangerous. From my house to the factory the bus leaves me at a dangerous part and I have to walk from there.

**Dangerous in what way? Is there a lot of crime, like somebody may attack you?**

I have to walk through a cemetery. Last time we were walking with some people from the other factory and there was a car driving very fast that started to make shots.

**Is it dark when you get off the bus?**

Yes, it is dark in the morning and the afternoon.

**What time do you get to work?**

I get to work at 7am. The factory starts at 7:15am. The first fifteen minutes we have breakfast, but we start to work before because our goals are really high.

**Do you have to bring your own food to the factory or is food provided?**

No, I have to pay for my own breakfast in the cafeteria.

**Maybe you can tell us some challenges about working in the Maquila.**

The high doors and walls are up against [inaudible].

**Do you have to stand up when you're working or do you sit down?**

I sit down

**A lot of the people have told us the work is very repetitive and often hurts their arms and shoulders. Is that something you face or is it a different kind of work?**

No it is the same type of activity.

**Is there a union at your factory?**

We are in the process of forming a union.

**Why did you decide to form a union?**

For all the violations of our rights as workers in the factory.

**Can you tell us a little about those violations and what they are?**

The first one I can mention is the pressure to meet production goals. When we came back from vacations, a co-worker who doesn't have the same skills as I do is incapable of doing her job. Supervisor, manager, who is an ex-militant, so the pressure my coworker felt was too heavy. As the member of a union in my case I decided to talk to the manager. So I took him to the line production to show him my coworker and when we got there she skipped lunch in order to meet the goals and we saw her crying. The activity she was doing worried her because she didn't have the skills. So I took the manager to show him how she was doing.

**And how did he respond?**

He said "I don't care she has to be there."

**How did your coworker feel? Was she pleased or was she afraid you talked to him?**

She was afraid of it and I did it without her permission.

**Were there any repercussions after or did everything go back to normal?**

The next day after that she hurt her finger with the equipment. They took her to the doctor and put somebody else in her position which is what we had been asking for.

**Was she taken care of by the doctor in the factory?**

Yes, they saw her.

**And was that free to you?**

No.

**Could you talk a little about how your manager responded to the idea of you forming a union?**

That is your best question. These people put their voice in the sky. They screamed.

**What did they say?**

They told me they knew I was trying to form a union in the factory and it's a persecution to my position

**Are you afraid of losing your job?**

Yes.

**What is the reaction of your colleagues? Are they supportive or too afraid to join you?**

My coworkers are afraid to lose their jobs.

**How many people in your factory are interested in joining then union?**

At this moment we have 40 people.

**Are you trying to recruit more people?**

Yes.

**How do you try to recruit them? What kinds of things do you say?**

I tell them the benefits of the union because I came from another factory that had a union.

**And how was the factory with the union compared to this factory?**

There is a big difference. We never had the situations like the one with my coworker. Those things didn't happen.

**Why was that? Why did these situations never happen?**

Because they made whatever they want but the factories as a union we support our coworkers. The factories were more involved.

**Do you think in the factories with the unions that the managers are more worried about mistreating the workers?**

There is a difference between factories with and without unions. Without unions managers do whatever they want.

**And the factories with the unions, how are they different?**

The managers respect our labor rights.

**Why?**

If we have an issue with the manager we have the right to stop the line production to solve the problem.

**Does that normally work?**

Yes

**Do you think you will be successful in starting a union here and that the managers will be more respectful?**

Yes

**Can I ask you what the factory you worked in before and what was the union?**

I worked for Fruit of the Loom.

**What was the name of the factory that had the union?**

I worked there three years and ten months. When I was there they closed the factory. They reopened it after two years.

**When they reopened the factory there wasn't a union anymore?**

Yes for the union that's why they reopened.

**Why did they close the factory?**

To take care of the union

**Before they closed the factory, is this the one that had the better working conditions because of the union rights and the understanding managers?**

Yes.

**Why didn't they like the union?**

When there is a union in a factory they have to involve the workers in the decision of the factory.

**And the managers don't like this because they have to be more involved in the production?**

No, because the members of the union are reference for the workers and we work hard.

**How did you know the managers were closing the factory because of the union? Did they tell you or threaten you?**

It was a huge corporation. We started to be part of the decisions and that's why the managers closed it down.

**Did they tell you this or that is what you thought?**

We always thought that. They had other factories running here in this country and they closed factories with unions.

**What happened afterwards? Did you get another job?**

No, I couldn't find a job.

**Did you try to find other work but there was no vacancies, or were you not hired because of your affiliation with a union?**

I was trying. I applied to [inaudible] twice but they would not take me because I had belonged to that other factory.

**You mentioned you had daughters, how many do you have?**

Two girls. One is 13 and the other is 5.

**Do they go to school? What do they do while you're at work?**

One goes to school and my mother watches the other one.

**Does your mother live with you?**

Yes.

**While you were out of work, did you have to pay for the school or was it free?**

Public school.

**So your children could still go to school while you looked for work?**

Yes.

**Can you talk about the challenges when you lost your job?**

Looking for the job is the hard part.

**Can you talk about the ways this is difficult?**

The school wanted things and I didn't have money to pay.

**Were you waiting for compensation from the factory or companies after they closed?**

When the factory closed they gave us our time.

**They paid you the compensation?**

Yes.

**Would you mind telling me how much compensation they paid you?**

Fifteen thousand Lempiras.

**How long could you survive on that?**

Just one year.

**How did you manage to get the compensation? Was there a struggle or did the company just give it?**

[Video cuts off and picks up somewhere else]

Like three months ago when I was working they called me to the conference room. I was wondering why they called me to the conference room. The woman worked with the general manager I was scared because I didn't expect it. Made a sexual accusation against me. I was shocked because I was wondering who did it, what was going on. The position was needed for another lady. She is a trainer and operator like me. I tried to defend myself. I do not know the orientation of these people because their position was very serious. Probably didn't want me to get back to the factory. I think it was a persecution because I'm part of the unions. After lunch they called me again. The lady still said she felt she was being harassed. We talked until 4:30pm. Three weeks after that, the lady was talking with someone else and said she felt terrible what she did.

**Did she admit she made it up?**

She induced it for the manager.

**Are you the main union organizer for your factory?**

Yes.

**Are the other people involved facing prosecutions like this?**

Yes, my coworker. She is part of it the persecution.

**Have any different things happened to her that haven't happened to you?**

The guard always goes to the bathroom at the same time as me

**Is that only for you?**

Yes.

**Do you think that is because you are part of the union?**

Yes. Yesterday I went to the bathroom. When I got back they gave me a mark for being in the bathroom.

**Do you know if your factory produces things for American universities?**

Yes.

**How do you know? Do they have the logo?**

They have logos.

**What other organization are you in contact with for the union?**

We are part of the CGT. We are training here right now.

**Do you get most of your information for the rights from the CGT?**

I don't know.

[Interview Ends]