

# **DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS**

**BOX 1 OF 16**

**FOLDER 16**

**EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE ON  
HUMAN EQUALITY ANTI  
ELRUM**

Dear Brother:

Changes have been filed with the National Labor Relations Board against the racist Chrysler Corporation and the United Automobile Workers (UAW), for its harsh and brutal exploitation of Black people who work in Chrysler plants.

These changes represent a first step in our legal attack on our enemies for the purpose of obtaining any possible relief from the terrible conditions for the purpose of widespread education among the masses of people on just what goes on in an auto plant. This action is of great importance to our people and your cooperation is of the utmost importance in making this a successful effort.

If you have information that can be of help to the investigators please fill out the questionnaire and return it to a League of Revolutionary Black Workers representative or to our office at 9049 Oakland Ave at Owens.



# NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

REGION 7

500 Book Building, Detroit, Michigan 48226

Telephone 226-3200

June 25, 1969

Sylvester Joseph Hyman  
15361 Baylis  
Detroit, Michigan 48238

Chrysler Corporation  
Case No. 7-CA-7339  
and

International Union, United Automobile,  
Aerospace and Agricultural Implement  
Workers of America, UAW, and its  
Locals 3 and 961

Cases Nos.

Re: 7-CB-1972

7-CB-1973

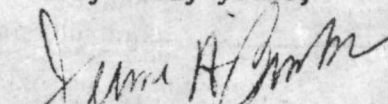
7-CB-1974

Dear Mr. Hyman:

We acknowledge receipt of your written request for a copy of your affidavit in the above matter.

In the circumstances involving your request, it is our policy to furnish the affiant, at his address, with a copy of his affidavit following receipt of a written request from him therefor. Accordingly a copy of the affidavit in question is enclosed.

Very truly yours,

  
Jerome H. Brooks  
Regional Director

Enclosure

DML:as

Dear Eldrum and Drum Members:

This is a special note to tell you how I feel about that obscene pamphlet you gave me yesterday morning. The pamphlet started out alright but all of a sudden you lost your cool.

Your pamphlet displayed disrespect for your fellow workmen and was a disgrace to every black woman who works here.

You showed by your thoughts that you are ignorant, have no pride and lack any dignity. Also you have low morals, no character and a very nasty mind. You seemingly have no knowledge of the problems the black man faces today. If you understood the situation you would have to admit that you are the biggest problem of all. Educating you and people like you is the first step the black man must take in overcoming his problem.

Your expressions make you a discredit to the black man and the black cause. You write out of fear with the overtones of racism. Further, it appears that you are living in a dream world and don't know reality. I feel that you should wake up to the real facts of things and do something constructive.

It is obvious that you want to be a leader. Fine and good. We need leaders to help fight racism. But we don't need leaders like you because you are distorting everything for which the black man is fighting. Judging by the way you write, you couldn't lead an intelligent black man around the corner (can you dig it?).

The black man doesn't want to be reminded of the past. He is quite busy working for the future. At this crucial moment you come along with that nigger bit. Do you know what a nigger is? If so, answer me this, if the white man calls you nigger does that mean automatically make you one? Well, it is true that I am black and I am proud of it. But I am no nigger now and never will be one. You speak of house niggers and field niggers, I wonder which one you are.

What the white man done to the black man in those nigger days happened because the black man could not help it. It's not that he didn't want to help himself. He just didn't know how to go about it then and you don't know now. You want to fight for the equal rights of the black man but you don't know how to go about it. You are moving in reverse. You are also destroying the image of the black man.

The white man has said that the black man has no respect but noted black man from the past and the present have shown that he has a high regard for respect. Now you come along with that remark that the black women in this plant are tramps, at least most of them. (can you dig it?).

The white man has said that the black man has no pride. Hundreds of black men have been fighting for years to show the white man he has lied. Then you come along with those terms "house niggers" (Are you hip to it?) The white man has said that the black man is ignorant. The black men of today know that gaining knowledge is of vast importance and that he must qualify and apply himself. He also knows that whatever goals he wishes to reach can be accomplished with effort. And here you come with that assembly line, urine and that john remark. (Are you hip to it?). Can you see what I am trying to say?

We black men of the Eldon Avenue Axle Plant don't need nasty talk and cuss words to express ourselves. We need some aggressive leaders that understand the problem and move in an intelligent manner to solve it. We also respect our women here and we wish you could also.

As for the union officials of Local 961, they have been elected. And if the black people here want a black official it is their duty to elect him. We can't blame the white man for all the wrong. Some of the blame falls on us. A lot of this injustice is our fault. For we are not totally just and fair to ourselves. Thousands of black people have tried to tear down the walls of injustice and racism. But thousands of other black men have built them up again. So until we unite and work as one, and I don't mean black and all black, I mean black and white together, we will always be building and others will be tearing down.

If you really want to help out here you can start a club where you are like the one I am going to start. It is called the E. C. H. E., Employees Committee on Human Equality. This club will fight hard to solve the problems that confront us as workers, black or white. This club will meet and socialize to allow its members to understand one another. If we want to do something about this racial imbalance, if we want to make this a better place to work we will have one hundred percent participation. Understanding is the greatest thing in the world. It is the key to any problem. There has been too much talk, now it is time for action. So lets get started if we haven't already (you better get hip to it if you don't dig it).

CHARLES HALE

AFFIDAVIT

I, Sylvester Joseph Hyman, being first duly sworn upon my oath, affirm and say I am 20 years of age and I reside at 15361 Baylis, Detroit, Michigan My telephone number is 861-7457. My social security number is 578-66-0927. I have been employed by Chrysler Corporation--Elden Gear and Axle Plant since December 13, 1968. My job classification is production assembly in Dept. 79. My foreman's name is Leon Washington. His title is general foreman.

I am a member of ELRUM. I have passed out literature both inside and outside the plant. When I pass out literature outside the plant I stand at the Lynch Road main gate. I passed out this literature before the beginning of the first shift--about 6:30am. I generally passed out literature in the plant by carrying it in my hip pocket . When someone didn't have a copy I would give it to him. I generally confined my passing out of literature to my own department. I believe I was observed passing out literature by my foreman on several occasions but he never approached me about it. I have never had any conversations with him at all about passing out ELRUM literature. Sometime in early January, 1969 I was late to work. My general foreman, Leon Washington asked me why I was late to work. I told him that a train had gotten into the way of my bus. He asked me if I was sure that I hadn't been passing out literature. He didn't say anything further about this. This is the only conversation I have had with a member of management about ELRUM literature or passing it out. I have never been asked by any foreman if I belong to ELRUM.

I do attend the ELRUM meetings. There were no elections during the time I worked for Chrysler.

Prior to the wildcat at Eldon in January, 1969 I was absent frequently. I'm sure that my record must have warnings for absenteeism. Prior to the wildcat I had never been given any disciplinary lay-offs for absenteeism. I would estimate that I missed work during this period about once a week.

I judge that the wildcat took place on Monday, January 27, 1969 because of the intolerable working conditions that existed in the plant prior to this walkout. For example, in my department, Department 79, we were working twelve hours a day. Also on the particular job that I was working on there had been a time study on the job sometime in early January, 1969. As a re-

*Sylvester J. Hyman*

sult of that time study I ~~was~~ started working on the equivalent of two jobs. In my department also there was a lot of oil and grease on the floor which made it very difficult to work. Also the casings for the gears as they came down the conveyor did not have any wire cages on them. As a consequence these casings often fall off on the floor. I never observed any of these casings hit anyone while I was working in the department. In addition prior to the walkout there had been problems at the end of the line. While these casings are on the conveyor they probably weigh about 35 lbs. By the time they reach the end of the conveyor they weight from 80-90 lbs. The men working at the end of the line have a device which they hook on to the ends of the casing. This device lifts the casings off the conveyor and loads them on trucks. For the last three days before the wildcat the "guas" as we call them had been broken and the men had had to lift the casings off by themselves. I know that the men in this area had complained to both the Company and their union stewards without getting any satisfaction.

At the head of our line there is a job which consists of putting gears in a case. It is operated by three white men and a white woman. They are building parts for our  $\frac{8}{4}$  line. Each day these people went home about 3:00pm about four hours before we went home. When we asked our foreman about this he tried to tell us it was because they weren't part of our line. When they went home the foreman would go over to the main line in department 79, the  $\frac{7}{4}$  line and take people off that  $\frac{7}{4}$  line and put them on the job on our line. He had to do this because without people putting gears into this casing at the head of our line we couldn't operate the line. Most of the employees on the line are black. It appears to me that the company was showing favoritism to the white employees by letting them go home at 3:00pm while keeping the rest of us there until 7:00pm. Most of the employees that replaced these four white employees were black. (the names of the four whites are Gladys(?) Frank(?)) The foreman who would let these four white employees go home and then replace them with black employees from another line is named Bill (last name unknown).

On January 27, 1969 I reported for work at 6:30am. There was a picket line out in front of the plant at this time. The pickets were carrying signs which said "Down with racist Chrysler corporation" and "The UAW is racist." "Black is for our people, red is for our blood and green is for this land."

*Robert J. Hoover*

The pickets marched in front of all three gates to the plant. I did not cross the picket line. I walked all around the area near the east gate which is near Lynch Rd. The closest I came to the picket line was within talking distance of the pickets. I did not walk in the picket line but I was in this vicinity at the start of each shift.

The strike lasted for only one day.

The next day I returned to work as normal. My foreman Bill (last name unknown) asked me where I had been the day before. I told him that there had been a picket line outside the plant and that I always honored a Picket Line.

The next day I woke up late and I knew that if I went to work I would ~~pp~~ probably be fired. I did not report to work that Wednesday. Instead I tried to get a doctor's excuse but he was closed. I took off work that Thursday also and I went and got a doctor's excuse. I reported for work on Friday, January 31, 1969.

*Shots from*

That day before work started I was passing out literature at the main gate on Lynch Rd. I passed ~~pp~~ out literature from about 6:00-6:25am. At about 6:25am I put the EKRUM literature in a brown paper bag and walked through the parking lot to the main gate. This white guy was walking behind me at this time. He knew that I was passing out ELRUM literature because he had asked me for a copy of the literature before when I was passing it out in the parking lot. I believe he asked me for a copy of the ELRUM leaflet just as I was putting the material into the bag. I don't know this white man's name. I know he works in my department. I saw this white guy go into the guard booth. I did not hear what he said when he got inside the booth. Suddenly a guard ran after me and started to call my name. I do not know this guard and I don't know how he would know my name unless this white guy told him. He told me to follow him into the guard house. When I got inside the Captain immediately said "what you got inside some good literature." I asked him what he meant. He told me that he knew that I had been passing out literature and that I couldn't bring it inside the plant. He told me that I could write my name on the bag and that I could pick it up after work. I didn't want to argue with him so I put my name on the bag.

I went to work and I worked that day. About 2:15 pm my foreman came



to me and told me to get my coat and come with him to labor relations. When I got to labor relations a man named Pauls Groves read Section 5 of the P&M contract to me. He told me that I was in gross violation of this section. He told me I had violated this section of the contract by participating in the strike. Two plant protection men then escorted me out the plant. Groves had previously told me that I was discharged. I asked one of the guards to have the Captain send my bag out and he did so.

About a week later about 15 guys in addition to myself who had been fired for participating in the wildcat went to the Local UAW hall. The UAW was having a leadership meeting at the time. I spoke both to my steward, Robert Smith and my committeeman Willie Farmer. My steward told me that a grievance had been filed by a committeeman for my whole district. He told me that I would not have to file individually because of this.

Sometime in April, 1969 I went to the Local hall to talk to ~~President~~ President Ed Rickard. Rickard told us that he had the grievances right there. Fred Holsey was with me at the time and he asked to see his. He looked at his and I asked to see mine. Rickard said he couldn't find mine.

About two weeks later I went to talk to him about it again and he told me that it hadn't been filed. I asked him why not and he told me it was because I was a probationary employee. I told him that this was irrelevant because I had been there the requisite 31 days to become a member of the union and get union representation. We went through a long argument about this and he finally wound up by saying that it would be untimely for him to file one then and that it was my committeeman's fault that one hadn't been filed.

I confronted my committeeman, Willie Farmer, with this and he told me that Labor Relations had refused to give him ~~the~~ my discharge slip which he needed ~~to~~ to write a grievance. I asked him why he hadn't contacted me sooner about this and he told me that he hadn't been able to get in touch with me.

I have read this statement consisting of four pages and I fully understand its contents. I swear they are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Shirley J. Hran

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 18th day of June, 1969 at Detroit, Mich.

Deane M. Lepsey  
Board Agent