

# DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 2 OF 16

FOLDER 29

CHRYSLER ELDON UAW 981  
WORK STOPPAGE APR 1970



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THURSDAY, FRIDAY,  
SATURDAY April 30,  
May 1 and 2, 8:30 p.m.  
Rackham Auditorium  
(Woodward at Farnsworth)  
Admission: \$2.50  
Student adm: \$1.50

# WILDCAT AT CHRYSLER

"We had it all arranged. Someone called me at five to six and said "Walk 'em out at six."

Thursday evening, April 16, at 6:00 the entire second shift of Chrysler's Eldon Avenue Gear & Axle plant, a key Chrysler plant, walked off their jobs in a wildcat strike protesting an employee's discharge in the latest of several recent incidents of management harassment and intimidation of Axle Plant workers.



The employee, a 105 lb. black worker, and his forman, a white Louisianan weighing 180-190 lbs., argued about the worker's production output at the end of the third shift Wednesday morning. The argument culminating in the foreman grabbing a pinion gear from a near-by conveyor (pinions weigh about 12 lbs.) and threatening to "bash your brains in." Later, the foreman claimed the employee had his hand in his pocket during the argument, and he thought the

worker was going to pull a knife on him. However, another employee who witnessed the altercation stated the discharged worker at all times kept his hands clear of his pockets.

Management's reaction was to fire the employee and refuse to take any action whatsoever against the foreman. Chrysler's position was it would protect its foremen when they're protecting themselves against employees. Negotiations began at noon Wednesday and continued until 5:30 that afternoon, the union demanding immediate reinstatement of the employee and discharge of the foreman, and Chrysler adamantly refusing each demand. The word was then given to union stewards in the plant to inform the workers and walk them out of the shop. After the walkout the union stated there would be no further negotiations of any kind until the foreman was out of the plant.

The plant remained shut down on all shifts until the first shift Monday morning when employees returned to their jobs as instructed by the union at a special membership meeting Sunday. Chrysler removed the foreman from the plant, and the incident is being negotiated along with numerous other alleged Chrysler violations of a Memorandum of Understanding completed by the company and the union Jan. 16, 1970.

A strike vote will be held Monday, April 27 and negotiations will continue 7 days after that. These steps are being taken to comply with legal requirements and to obtain Solidarity House's official sanction of a strike. Otherwise, no strike benefits can be paid, and the strike leaders could be sued by Chrysler for damages resulting from the walkout. If the union is not satisfied with Chrysler's actions when the 14 day "cooling off" period is ended, the plant will be officially struck.

Meanwhile, the word is out in the plant; any more instances of management harassment and intimidation and the shop will immediately walk out again.—John Taylor

# THE RADICAL BOMBERS

*But you see, we all believe in what Bakunin and Nachaev said: that a revolutionary is a doomed man ... So you come to terms with the idea that you may be killed. And when you have to live with the prospect of being wiped out in a flash, you either stop doing what you're doing and remove yourself from that situation, or else you have to accept it and kind of repress it, and get it off your mind. Otherwise, you'll be nonfunctional. You can't walk around afraid and watching and looking over your shoulder. Anyway, I think many people these days have learned to live with that understanding. I learned to live with it somehow.* Eldridge Cleaver

Ralph Featherstone lived in Neshoba County, Mississippi, for two years, off and on. He had first come there one day in the summer of 1964 to meet three fellow civil rights workers in a church in the county seat of Philadelphia. The three had left Featherstone in Meridian in the morning; he was to catch up with them in Neshoba later in the afternoon. Featherstone waited all afternoon in the church in Philadelphia. Micky Schwerner, James Chaney and Andy Goodman never did come.

Black folks in Philadelphia gave Featherstone a place to sleep and food to eat, and he'd pay them a few dollars every now and then with money he'd get from Northern white contributions to SNCC. Then the money stopped, and Featherstone began working on economic development projects which might

along the way were the mileposts of a generation, the markings of a movement, passed as soon as they were come upon, quickly out of sight. It's hard to say how one or another man or woman is bound to travel, and it can't be known where anyone is going to stop. Ralph missed a meeting in Neshoba; but then he kept his appointment in Bel Air.

A desperate irony of history, a dialectical pun, put Featherstone's death next to the explosions in the Wilkerson house in Greenwich Village and the bombings a few nights later of three corporations' offices in Manhattan. In evidentiary terms, the events of that week seem totally disconnected. Featherstone and his companion, Che Payne, were most probably murdered by persons who believed that Rap Brown was in their car. Featherstone had gone to Bel Air on the eve of Brown's scheduled appearance at the trial to make security arrangements; Brown had good reason to fear for his safety in that red neck of the woods. No one who knew the kinds of politics Featherstone was practicing, or the mission he was on in Bel Air, or the quality of his judgment, believes that he was transporting a bomb—in the front seat of a car, leaving Bel Air, at midnight, in hostile territory, with police everywhere.

The police and newspaper accounts of the goings-on in the Wilkerson house on West Eleventh Street seem—in outline, at least—consistent within themselves and probable in the (dim) light of developments after the recent break-

some radical bottom. Guerilla attacks by the revolutionary Left and counter-attacks by the extreme Right seem almost natural in America this winter. When students demonstrate, they do not merely sit-in but burn-up: They fire-bomb a bank in Santa Barbara, snipe at policemen in Buffalo. Few peaceful marches end peacefully; both marchers and police are ready to fight.

The newspapers have begun calling the current crop of radicals "revolutionaries," but they have removed the quotation marks and have dropped such skeptical qualifiers as "self-styled" or "so-called" before the word. For the first time in half a century, at least—and perhaps since 1776—there is a generalized revolutionary movement in the US. It is not directed at organizing labor or winning civil rights for minorities or gaining power for students in the administration of universities. Wholly unorganized and utterly un-directed, the revolutionary movements exists not because it is planned but because it is logical: not because a handful of young blacks or dissident middle-class whites will it, but because the conditions of American life create it: not because the Left is so strong, but because the center is so weak.

It's worth saying what the revolutionary movement is *not*. First of all, it's not big—at least the active part. All the people who are into demolitions this year could gather in a townhouse or two in the Village—and probably did. There have been scores of bombings in the past six months—in New York, Seattle, the San Francisco Bay Area, Colorado and scattered college towns. In Madison, Wisconsin, for instance, someone predicted "Zabriskie

they draw a positive response from a surprisingly large number of ordinary people—even those who venture out of their conventional lives for nothing more exciting than a Moratorium rally, and who will tell you before you ask that they "deplore" violence. The contradictions of the society as a whole exist within each of them as well.

Finally, the revolutionary movement is not professional, nor is it politically mature, nor tactically consistent. Nor is there much chance that it will get itself together in the coming months. If it was a "tragic accident" that killed three young people in the Eleventh Street house, it was in one sense no accident: Those who seek to build a revolution from scratch must inevitably make such mistakes. (For a description of how amateurish revolutionaries can be, read Che's diaries.) The politics of the guerilla acts are not always self-explanatory, even to committed radicals; in what kind of political demands were the Manhattan bombings set? One New York radical activist said recently that those acts could have contextual meaning only if the messages demanded US withdrawal from Vietnam and Laos, say, or freedom for Black Panthers in jail. A note which threatened continued attacks until the war ended, for example, would make sense to many more people than the seemingly "nihilist" statements made last week.

At this stage, tactics can be crucial. Attacks against property—in which care is taken to avoid injuries to people—are much more easily understood than terrorist acts against police, much less "innocent" bystanders. It's necessary, too, to think through

the redwoods are toppling, the teenagers are shooting-up, the women are liberating themselves, the stock market is falling and the Viet Cong is winning.

Neither does repression happen in a single tone of voice. Even in the most critical of times (especially in the most critical of times) the State acts, as Lenin put it, like hangman and priest: Despite the policy of "benign neglect" which the Nixon Administration is following in most matters, the process of buying off black revolution—by accepting black militancy—is continuing at a fast clip. If the government tends to fall behind in the effort, private corporations, foundations and educational institutions keep up the pace. In the same months that Fred Hampton is killed or desegregation is postponed in Mississippi, millions of dollars went to black urban bureaucrats; black students were streaming into previously white colleges and white jobs; and the government made plans to give preferential hiring to blacks in construction jobs. It's easy but unwise to dismiss such methods as "meaningless," or "too little," or "cynical." Of course, the "Philadelphia plan" for hiring black construction workers is also a way to limit the power of labor unions. But in the near and middle-distances those measures—the repressive and the cooptive—are reasonably successful in blunting the chopping edge of the black liberation movement.

In the week that Vice President Agnew is denouncing "kooks" and "social misfits," and Conspiracy Prosecutor Foran is talking of a "freaking fag revolution," the Nixon Administration and a coalition of politicals from (and including) Goldwater to Kennedy are proposing lowering the voting age to 18, and plans are going ahead for an all-volunteer Army. Again, the point is not that either of those proposals will accomplish much in the way of changing social values in America; but those measures are not exactly Nuremberg Laws to be used against a radical force or a distasteful element of society.

In the wake of the bombings and deaths last week, the FBI fanned out to question anyone known to have a connection with the Eleventh Street people. Agents were unusually uptight; one set of FBI visitors called a New York man who declined to speak to them a "motherfucker." There were po-



# AN INDUSTRIAL HORROR STORY

**A**pril 16 Chrysler's Eldon Ave. Gear and Axle plant was shut down by a wildcat walkout for a weekend. The immediate reason for the wildcat, which came about half-way through the second shift, was a foreman's threatening an employee he would "bash your brains out" with a pinion gear. Management's position was it would fire the employee and take no action against the foreman.

This incident, however, was only the latest in a series of similar incidents that had left tempers and nerves raw and sensitive. The President of the Local had been in the plant for several days previously negotiating these incidents and threatening to shut down the plant, if they weren't settled. Over the weekend tempers cooled. Chrysler reinstated the employee with full back wages, and after several unsuccessful attempts to return the foreman to the floor of the plant, the company transferred him to another plant. Two days after the walkout the plant was again running full production.

April 27 the Local called for a strike vote from the membership. The vote passed with a 93% majority. The only thing notable about the vote was it was ratified two weeks later by Walter Reuther on the day before he was killed in an airplane crash; Reuther's ratification was one of the last official acts he performed for the U. A. W. Nobody in the plant, and most of the union officials, have heard nothing further about it.

This walkout occurred on the second shift--which is generally regarded as the most militant shift in the plant. The six second shift Stewards and a Trustee who work on that shift who had walked the shop out, are considered some of the strongest stewards and officers in the union. In the negotiations that followed the strike, Chrysler promised no reprisals would be taken against the stewards until the issue had been thoroughly negotiated. It was soon apparent the company had no intention of keeping its promise.

Friday, May 1 at about 10:00 p.m. (the second shift ends at 10:30) the stewards were called into the labor relations office and told they were fired for leading an unauthorized work stoppage in violation of the "no-strike" clause of the contract. The only "negotiations" had been a meeting earlier that afternoon in which management had stated only that "action" will be taken without explaining further. After this meeting the President of the Local met with the stewards and told them to shut the plant down again if they were fired. They followed his orders, and by 12:30 that night the plant was shut down again.

Leadership meetings were held the next two days, and it was agreed, in a long bitter meeting, that all the union stewards and officers would man the plant gates. This would have forced Chrysler to fire the entire union leadership, a legally insupportable action. However, all the officers and a number of stewards and Committeemen refused to participate in the strike when the time came to picket. The result was that those who kept their agreement, the Chief Shop Committeemen and a third shift steward, were also fired. The company could now boast it had fired almost every militant union official in the plant.

Solidarity House, always against wildcats, gave the Local no support at all. Chrysler obtained an injunction against the strike with only token opposition from Bruce Miller, a U. A. W. attorney. The Local's officers urged the Eldon workers to return to work, and by Monday the plant was again running at full production, minus nine of the union's strongest stewards and officials.



**...in which men and women die and the UAW sells out in the name of the great god CORPORATE PROFIT**

The result was also obvious: five of the original nine are still in the streets. The other four recently returned to work with a gun at their heads and minus one entire month's wages. They were penalized six month's disciplinary lay-off with five months waived by the company. If there's another walk-out, they're fired.

The sell out continued. In negotiating the firings, the Local's officers, particularly the president, denied the stewards were following orders when they shut the plant down May 1. The Local's position was they had acted on their own. The reason was obvious: the officers knew they would also be accused of instigating an unauthorized work stoppage.

May 11, 1970 the Eldon Workers Safety Committee was formed. The Committee described itself as "a group of workers concerned about plant safety and hazardous working conditions" and its program was to educate Eldon workers about the abnormally dangerous conditions in the plant. The Committee began to leaflet the plant pointing out many specific safety hazards and explaining that the National Labor Relations Act allows any worker or group of workers to refuse to work under abnormally dangerous conditions.

Several days later the Committee learned of the death of a female employee with twenty-six years seniority. She had been on sick leave and was ordered to return to work or be fired. When she was reinstated to work the plant doctor noted her high blood pressure. He allowed her to return to work, and a few days later she was carried out of the plant on a stretcher. The next day she died. The Safety Committee intensified its efforts.

Meanwhile the local, particularly the President, actively opposed the Safety Committee. He argued against its program to anyone who would listen. He ordered the Committee out of the hall on three different occasions, threatening police action, breaking and entering, warrants and restraining orders.

May 25 a twenty-two-year-old black Vietnam veteran was crushed to death under three tons of scrap steel. He died leaving behind a small child and a pregnant wife. The employee, a fork-lift truck driver, was told to empty a hopper of scrap steel into a railroad car. The hopper release catch was jammed with dirt or rust and he had to dismount from the truck to pry it open with a stick. Dismounting exposed him to danger from the hopper-loaded jitney. The truck had no emergency brakes, a common condition at Eldon. There are also many chuck holes in the loading platform--another safety hazard. Apparently the employee succeeded in prying open the release catch. As the steel spilled out, the load shifted causing the truck to tip over and crush the driver under tons of steel.

This death, the second in two weeks, impelled the Safety committee to throw up pickets on May 27 and 28 to persuade employees not to work until the plant was a safe place to earn a living. Members of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and black students from Highland Park Junior College aided in the picketing and leafleting of the plant.

The Local's opposition to the Safety Committee continued. An important part of the strategy was to turn people away from the gates and ask them to go to the main Union Hall. Members of the Committee were at the hall ready to explain the entire Safety Committee program and persuade the employees to refuse to work under hazardous conditions. But the President locked the hall, with the full backing of Solidarity House, and kept it locked for an entire week. Only the second shift refused to work in substantial numbers. The majority of the first and third shift workers, after milling around and waiting to see what would happen broke the picket lines.

Four of the leaders of the Safety Committee were fired, for "unauthorized picketing" in violation of the no-strike clause. Their discharges have been investigated by the union, but little can be expected from the grievance procedure since both the Local and Solidarity House were adamantly opposed to the Committee's existence. An influential representative of Solidarity House is reported to have described the fired Committee members as "irresponsible troublemakers" and a program of red baiting these employees is reportedly underway.

While this has been going on Chrysler has been busily cleaning up its plant. Janitors have been working overtime to keep the plant clean and its floors free of oil, fourteen new jitney repairmen were hired, and unsafe machines are being repaired. The U. A. W. representative who labeled the discharged employees "troublemakers" inspected the plant along with officials from Chrysler headquarters in Highland Park. The Solidarity House official agreed the plant is unsafe and should be cleaned up.

Meanwhile, the fired members of the Safety Committee remain in the street.

BY BOB TAUB

The rumors going around say that Jesse Crawford, the soul-drawling high-energy screamer of WKNR-FM, is, in his own words, "a spade or a faggot or a dope fiend or just a crazed nut." None, except perhaps, for the last (it's for you to judge) are true.

Controversial Crawford, with long thick blond hair and beard, has a distinctive record--ex-announcer and road manager for the MC-5, a founder and ex-minister of the White Panthers, prophet of the Zenta religion, a 4-F, an accomplished drummer and piano player and according to Leni Sinclair, wife of John, "the greatest DJ in the whole world."

Crawford merely drawls, "Man, I jus' wanta put across some high-energy music, is all, and raise the revolutionary fervor."

In February, when Crawford first went on the air at KNR, the station's listeners polarized sharply. The studio was deluged with torrents of phone calls and letters--some filled with vociferous praise of Crawford and his "screamin,' carryin' on, high-energy, and flim-flam" and others loudly condemning him for amateurishness, strident shuck and jive. "Those against me wanted some intellectual things they could get inside their heads with--you know that gentle subtle stuff."

Crawford began it all in Cleveland, where he was born in 1948 (I'm an Aries with my rising sign in Taurus and my moon is in Cancer. . .). His family lived for two years in Cleveland and then moved to Marquette, Michigan. Strangely enough, the Crawford family lived just three miles from the maximum security prison where Crawford's close friend John Sinclair now dwells. Stranger still, Jesse's father works for the company which supplies the coal to heat the prison.

After four years in Marquette, they moved again to Cincinnati, Ohio. Two years later they made it back to Cleveland where Jesse spent the next ten years.

In Cleveland, Crawford attended private school from sixth to tenth grades. In his last semester at the school he held dual, though dubious, honors--vice-president of his class ("It went to the dude who liked to have a good time, joke around, drink beer on the weekend. . . no responsibility or anything") and earner of the most demerits.

After 138 demerits, the school threw him out for "rebelliousness" and he entered his sophomore year of high school at suburban Shaker Heights High. Soon he became immersed in greaser culture, and also formed a white soul band named the Upstarts--"the white knights with the brown sound."

Throughout high school Crawford, who had played piano since age six and drums since ten, provided the percussion for the Upstarts. The band played gigs four nights a week throughout the Midwest and the South--with such groups as the Kingsmen and the Hot Nuts.

Upon graduation from Shaker Heights, the band continued to play throughout the summer but broke up in the fall. With the other three members either getting married or going to college, Crawford decided to continue his musical career--at Eastern Michigan University's school of music.

Arriving at Eastern in the fall of 1966, Jesse was shocked almost out of his senses. Apparently, he was the only freak on campus. It was not long, however, before he met up with Billy C. Farlow and Lance Dickerson (both of whom now play with the Ann Arbor-based Commander Cody). The three soon perceived that college wasn't for them and they subsequently left for nearby Ann Arbor.

Crawford soon met Panther White, a resident of A2, who introduced him to the Prime Movers Blues Band who were in need of a drummer at the time. Passing the audition, Jesse joined the band and gigged with them for two years.

At age 20, when he left the Prime Movers, Crawford returned to his native Cleveland to fool around and face the claws of Selective Service.

He retells the tale: "When they called me down I was ready for 'm.

"I got together this floor length black velvet robe, man, and when I walked in there for the physical they totally flipped out.

"The dude sees me and his eyes just about fall out and he comes over and says, 'Are you supposed to be here?!?' and I answer, 'Yeah, sure, here are my papers.' I handed the papers over and he



## JESSE CRAWFORD:

takes me aside and says, shakin' kinda, 'Is there something wrong with you son?' And I go, 'Naw, there ain't nothing wrong with me.' And he goes, 'Good, then fill out these medical forms.'

"He hands me these forms and I go, 'Look, I can't fill these out,' and he starts to get excited agin' and says, 'Wwhy I thought there wasn't anything wrong with you?'

"And I say, 'There ain't--I just can't fill out the forms!' And he asks kinda timid, 'Why?' And I just say, 'Well, man through the use of the natural sacraments, herbs, and stimulents, I am able to contact my astro-body and travel the space-waves--I only come back once in a while to nourish my earth body. Right now I'm marooned here on this planet and I just want to get back to my people . . .'

"So, after that, the dude blew his mind in total. I mean that messed him up! He then kinda mumbles, 'Come with me.' So I follow him into the shrink.

"He gives me this great line of introduction, he sorta implores, 'Doc, this guy claims he's from Outer Space!!' The Psychiatrist takes one look at me in the fuckin' robe and he hears me give him the same rap about being of another world, and how he's the member of a decadent race of earthlings and all,

and he just goes, 'Pal, go home and take it

After he negated his draft eligibility, once again left Cleveland and traveled up to where he enjoyed a brief stay of a month or so

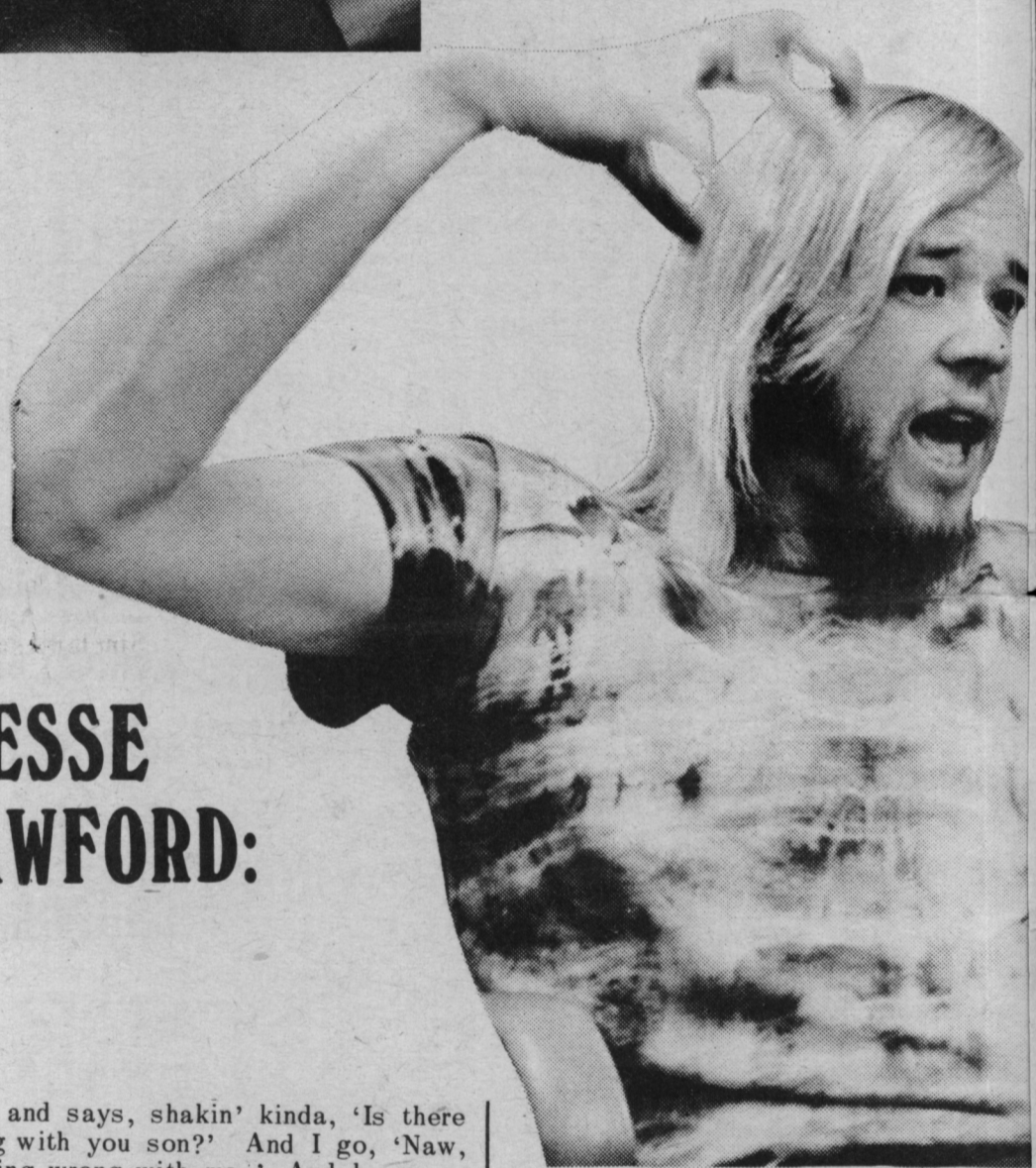
Upon returning to the states in September 1968, Jesse went to Ann Arbor to play with the Blues Band which had just gone through pe changes.

He didn't stay with them long, however, evening he was getting stoned (a major procc for Crawford) with his old friends John Sinclair the MC-5 at their home in Ann Arbor. As counts, he was too "beset and besot" to to his own place so he spent the night there

The following morning (3pm) when he the Five were getting ready to go do a job Oakland Pop Festival. Having nothing else Crawford went along for the ride.

On the way up, he recalls, they got "t and drunk down." All of them inebriated bey third dimension, the Five were about to c set when they realized they had no announc

"I told them, 'Gee, you dudes shou someone ta bring ya on.' I was drunk on fucked up, didn't know what I was doing, and up volunteering.



"I got up there and used this old J 'Live at the Apollo' intro, just sub names of the Five and their jams remember I started it out, 'Star time ladies and gentlemen . . . and now I hardest working band in show business MC-5!!!'

"Anyhow, the crowd flashed on it up EHHHHHAAAAH!! And the Five dug they got me to go along and do it at all so that's how it all got started."

Not only did Crawford do all their him, incidentally, who starts out their with the cry "Brothers and Sisters, I sea a hands. . ."), but he served as John Sinclair's right-hand man and road the band.

His duties encompassed everything f that the group's amplifiers were kept in to making sure that the band was "kept scored their dope."

When Sinclair was sent to prison in

## WALK OUT AT ELDON

Tony Moore: "We had it all arranged. Someone called me at five to six and said "Walk 'em out at six."

### Wednesday

Elroy in the plant last night. This is the first time I've ever seen him in the plant on the 3rd shift. More evidence of Chrysler and Local 961 discrimination against the third shift.(?)

Elroy was in the plant again tonight along with Charley Thornton. Around midnight Tony Moore said to pass the word to key people in the department; there might be a walkout. Apparently someone in 71 was unfairly discharged. Preacher called Elroy & Charley to the set. Apparently Elroy told Polsgrove he'd shut the motherfucker down, "might as well be the 1st one." I also found out from Johnny Moffett he called Elroy in last night on a racial hassel, and threatened to shut 81 down in both cases. Right on to that! I alerted some of the Lube-Rite crew, Jesse and Johnny K. in 74.

What went down Tuesday night was a racial thing in 81. Johnny Moffett promised to write it up for me. Apparently the company tried to suspend (?) or discharge (?) a black worker for drinking on the job (?) or alcoholism (?). Johnny mentioned both. He said white guys in the dept. for the same thing only got some days off. Clearly a racial rap. Johnny says he told the foreman if he suspended the man he'd have to suspend Johnny too! He called in Elroy from home and Elroy threatened to walk the shop out.

Wednesday night they <sup>ran</sup> ~~ran~~ a thing on a man in 72. They wrote him up on a bullshit charge of not getting enough iron same as they tried to run on Alonzo a week or so ago. They waited until 6:25 to do it so there'd be no steward on the set, and the next night when he started to punch in they called Plant Protection and started to walk him out. Preacher called in Elroy and they again went through a thing of threatening to shut it down. Apparently this again backed the company off.

If you consider these cases along with the intimidation & harassment Kroger Johnny & Ron laid on Dave, Johnny, Hardy and Billy in 74, and the cases in 72 and 76 Elrum has been bithhing about lately, its obvious the 73 incident was only one <sup>of</sup> an outbreak of plant-wide instances of management harassment, intimidation & brutal crushing of the dignity of the human beings who earn their living in Chrysler's Eldon Ave. Gear & Axle Plant.

What happened in 74 was this: four white guys, Dave, Johnny, Hardy and Billy (mostly Dave) led and organized a dept. meeting against Frank McKinnon, their Steward. They stirred up the dept. so much Kroger John ny told a jobsette the morning of their meeting, "They'd better not even spit backwards after this." This scummy intimidation was brought up at their meeting and Charley stormed and raged claiming he and the entire Executive Board would be in the dept.

*instances*

immediately anytime intimidation was reported to him & he'd shut the dept. down if necessary. The next night ~~when Johnny~~ when Johnny came in Ron greeted him with "Round two tonight, hey John." (Is anything more scummy and slimy than a foreman who threatens and intimidates his men? If the bastard has something on a man he should write him up and get it out in the open so the situation can be dealt with. But to shadow over a man's livelihood with threats and warnings is very near the nadir in management misconduct.) Johnny reported Ron's threat to McKinnon who talked to Ron and Johnny for a long time & seemed to have settled the matter. Johnny was satisfied. But I had a feeling I should mention it to Charley anyway so I asked Chuck Burton to ask Charley to come see me when he came in the plant. After the 4:30 break Charley & McKinnon came over to me at the Lube-Rite and I ran it to Charley in Frank's presence. Frank explained the set to Charley saying Ron had claimed he was only joking with Johnny & he didn't realize John would take it so seriously and he wouldn't do it again. (But later Johnny told me Ron's eyes weren't kidding when he made the remark.) Obviously Frank hadn't told Charley of the incident even though at the meeting Charley had specifically said he wanted to know about these things immediately. Johnny said Charley came to 74 and raised hell, telling, not asking, Kroger Johnny, Ron and the General Foreman to get off this harassment shit or the dept. would walk out and the local would back them up on it. Ron was off all last week, supposedly on vacation; Johnny says he knows for sure the dude got a disciplinary day off.

#### Thursday

More. Better. About 5:30 Thursday morning I saw Charley Thornton and Preacher walking out of the Production Office. I walked over & talked to them for a while. Charley & I talked about the By-Laws for a few minutes, and then I said I'd heard we'd almost walked out the last two nights. He said that's right and he also said to be ready for one ~~tonight~~ tonight when we come in and to pass the word. I'm almost certain there's a lot of feeling for a walkout in 74 and 75, and both Tony Moore and Johnny Moffett say the same about their districts. I'm pretty sure 72 and 76 would go out; Stan ~~Murray~~ Murray and Alonzo are in those departments and they seem to have their shit together pretty well. I don't know shit about 73 or 77 or 71 or any of the non-production depts. Fuck. I can't do better than conjecture or supposition any god-damned way about any dept., even 75. Fuck it. See what goes down and do what feels right.

We're out. We shut the motherfucker down. Charley Thornton called me about 9:00 tonight (very flattering) and said they walked the shop out about 6:00-6:30.

The walkout was caused by an incident that went down Wednesday morning in Dept. 73. A foreman named Ervin Ashlock, a Louisiana redneck, got into an argument with an employee, John Scott. Elrum's version is the argument began about 5:30 when Ashlock questioned Scott's production output and said he would walk him out that morning. At 6:30 after punching out Scott asked

Ashlock what his status was. The foreman claimed Scott kept his hand in his pocket during the arguement and he thought the worker had a knife he was getting ready to use. He grabbed a pinion off a line (pinions weigh about 10 lbs.) and told Scott he would "bash his brains in." Scott weighs about 105 lbs.; Ashlock is said to weigh about 180-190 lbs. Also, there were two other foremen with Ashlock when this shit went down. Scott apparently then left the dept. (with no disciplinary action of any kind being taken against him) and was on his way out of the plant when he met Charley Thornton, and told him what had happened. Charley immediately took Scott to the production office and confronted Ashlock and the General Foreman with the case. Management's first step was to suspend Scott until 12:00 when negotiations started. At the threshold of the negotiations, Scott was fired. The union demanded Scott be brought back with full back pay, and that Ashlock be fired. The company refused to reinstate Scott and refused to take any action whatsoever against Ashlock, claiming he was protecting himself and it will back up its men under those circumstances. This came down at 5:30 p.m. and by 6:30 the plant was down. The union's position now is it will not even fucking negotiate until Ashlock's ass is out on Lynch Rd.

Ashlock: on several occasions he's ordered hourly rated men to perform skilled trades work, spawning hassels and grievances. Dave McCluskey, machine repair, says he's had trouble with the man. He says he once asked Ashlock "Who do you think you are? Mr. Chrysler?" to which Ashlock replied "Yes, I'm Mr. Chrysler and I'll do anything I want."

Along with the incidents in 72, 81 and 74, several other aggravated cases were reported to the membership Thursday night:

- 1) An employee leaving the plant early with management approval found himself jammed between his car & the parking lot fence. He climbed over the fence to extricate himself and was fired by Plant Protection.
- 2) An employee got permission to leave early and went to dept. 80 to get his brother's car keys. A foreman in 80 saw the keys changing hands, came over to the men, and demanded they empty their pockets for him. One refused, and was fired for insubordination.

J. U. Sims addressed the meeting and began by saying "tonight the hunkies and niggers are all sitting together" James Edwards jumped to his feet and objected loudly saying he didn't see any niggers in the hall. Edwards also persistantly interrupted & argued with Elroy while he was explaining the reasons for the walkout to the membership. Elroy told him he wasn't going to tolerate any interruptions tonight, and would have him removed from the hall by the Sgt. at Arms. James, surprisingly, accepted this and was amazingly quiet the rest of the meeting. Maybe he noticed the people in the hall weren't picking up on what he said. It was Elroy's meeting.



Before the meeting last night J. U. was talking to me, Edwards and McKee about what had gone down in 73. I asked him if the employee was black and the foreman white. He said yes; I said "a racial incident." He, heatedly, said it wasn't a racial thing, it was a worker thing, a class thing. Edwards and McKee picked up on this and began yammering at Sims. I told J. U. I knew where he was coming from, and I agreed at the bottom level of analysis it was a class thing as is everything that happens in that plant. I pointed out its industrial capitalism that makes racists by assuming people are machines, not human beings. (I didn't quote from Malcolm X but maybe I should have.) But its naive to completely ignore the fact the foreman is from Louisiana, land of the redneck crackers, he's a stereotypical uptight honkey, he's emotionally crippled by his racial fears, he's an ignorant, vicious insecure man, probably very paranoid, a white Southerner put down in the middle of a predominantly black group in a strange cold part of the country and subjected to pressure from his bosses to produce a certain number of gears every night. How would you like to have/depend on a group of hostile strangers to get work out for you and your living depends on it. I doubt he thinks the white workers in 73 are strangers. You can't tell me he would have lifted a pinion against a white employee, come off now. At this level it was a racial incident, and this is an entirely appropriate level to handle it at, maybe the only really appropriate level. Because people can relate to it better. Even white people can appreciate and relate to the obvious unfairness of the situation and you know black people can dig it. But almost everybody, white and black, gets uneasy when you start talking about class struggle; they're unnerved by their culturally ingrained connotations of socialism and communism. They can't really relate to the issue at that level, they're, at least subconsciously, going to it as an issue they want to get involved in, and they probably won't be so enthusiastic about getting behind it.

Intense excitement when Charley called me. Hurried over to the plant, pulled in the lot and park. Sparks came over and said "Brother Taylor, you might just as well leave your engine running and go on down to the hall, we shut this motherfucker down at 6:30 tonight." So I walked down to the hall with an old jitney driver recently transferred to Eldon from Highland Park, and while we walk I ~~was~~<sup>old</sup> told him how heavy management has been lately; he agreed a strike was the best thing we could do.

A lot of these old ~~hippies~~ timers are very militant--at least about this strike--and they're very much behind it. Solidarity. During the meeting Chuck Burton mentioned talking to three old dudes in the parking lot, 70 years seniority between them, and he said they told him this is the best thing the union's done in all the time they've been at Eldon. But these old guys wouldn't think, or even consider, marching in an anti-war demonstration.

In the hall: tense jubilation, people milling around, greeting each other, exchanging militant slogans and congratulations. By 10:20 the hall is filled, we all sit down and the meeting begins. Elroy speaks first, hassled a little by Edwards from the floor. He gives a good, aggressive, militant speech, people shouting and clapping at appropriate times, "Right on", "all right", "amen, brother." He finishes and someone stands up and asks about getting his paycheck. Elroy dumps on him and nearly everybody applauds. Then the rest of the hierarchy: Sims, Dan Toomer, Charley, Chuck Burton, Preacher, Howard Willis. By 11:00 they are through speaking, excitement has waned, people are leaving during the last speech; the meeting is over.

A tremendous feeling of solidarity for at least a little while. Little bickering except for Edwards' challenges of Elroy from the floor, and nobody picked up on what James was saying. The jibes are friendly. When Charley takes the mike people laugh because he's so short, but it's friendly laughter. You move around the room, greeting and talking to people you see in the plant or the cafeteria all the time and recognize but don't ordinarily talk to.

Elroy says he's had 3 hours sleep in the last 2 days.

This is a good time for a strike. Chrysler needs the axles 'cos its selling lots of cars, especially Valiants. Partial shifts (12 & 15 men in 75) worked overtime the past 2 weeks apparently would have worked 100% this weekend. In 75 we've been running a shithouse of 7½ sets (used in Valiants), 3 batteries lapping them each night, about 1200 sets a night, approximately ½ a night's production, and these sets are not being stored, they're being immediately assembled into differentials in dept. 79. In 79 they've worked the 7½ line overtime almost every night the past several weeks, and the 8½ and 8¾ lines only a little less. More: Chrysler is reportedly committed to building a fairly large number of 70's to finish out the model and meet sales commitments. There was a rumor change over would be early this year so the company would have more time to peddle its 71's before the contract expires Sept. 14. If this is so, Chrysler is really in a bind, caught between the necessity of building a certain number of 70's, and a desire to change over early this year; but they can't get those 70's built if they can't get rear axles to put in 'em.

Eldon is a key Chrysler plant, its only sizable gear and axle plant. Practically all the company's rear axles are fabricated, machined and assembled at Eldon. There're small plants in Canada (?) and New York (?) but they can't begin to handle Chrysler's production requirements. Further, Eldon is located near the key assembly plants--Lynch Road, Hamtramck and Jefferson Assembly. Even if the New York and Windsor plants together could manufacture and assemble enough axles, there'd still be tremendous added transportation costs and this isn't even considering the requirements of the assembly plants in Wilmington, Belvedere and Los Angeles.

This is also a very astute political move by Elroy. It'll help silence a lot of the criticism he and his administration have been getting lately.

### Friday

This morning at the West Gate at aprox. 6:00 a.m. Stayed with Tony Moore, Sparks and Howard Willis steering people away from the plant and down to the hall. A number of supervisors there trying to persuade the men to go on in. Hefner and Polsgrove on the set, Hefner trying to dissuade me. He vaguely mentioned there'd be reprisals against the leaders for unauthorized work stoppage. I laughed at him and asked him if he thought I was naive or stupid. The other supervisors were saying things like "there's work available", "the union doesn't pay you", "Unauthorized wildcat strike", etc. Only a few went on in. They should have their asses whipped. But Willis says "no violence."

At the hall this morning: packed, more than last night, people looking in the windows. Elroy not here. Good speeches by J.U., Charley, Chuck Burton and Willis. Strong feelings of militancy and solidarity.

An employee from 73, Steve Felicia (?) stood up and said the fired man never had his hand in his pocket and had already punched out. He said Scott and Ashlock got into a hassel, Scott said "what's happening", and Ashlock pulled a pinion off the line and threatened Scott with it. All this after Scott had punched out. He finished by saying "Scott is a colored man and I'm white, but we're both at Chrysler's." Much enthusiastic response to this.

A few hours later we're lined up at the West Gate to get our checks. Some cops drive by and get out their bull horn and say, "you guys are double parked, you'll have to move your cars." People jeer at them and they ~~do~~ move on."

An intangible: how many of us were already stirred up and ready for action because of what went down in the Moratorium march Wednesday afternoon?

"We had it all arranged. Someone called me at five to six and said "Walk 'em out at six."

Submitted to  
Metro 4/20/70  
Pessy see they'll  
win it.

Thursday evening at 6:00 the entire second shift of Chrysler's Eldon Avenue Gear & Axle plant, a key Chrysler plant, walked off their jobs in a wildcat strike protesting <sup>an employee's discharge in</sup> the latest of several recent incidents of management harassment and intimidation of Axle Plant workers.

The employee, an 105 lb. black worker, and his foreman, a white Louisianan weighing 180-190 lbs., argued about the worker's production output at the end of the third shift Wednesday morning. The argument culminated in the foreman grabbing a pinion gear from a near-by conveyor (pinions weight about 12 lbs.) and threatening to "bash your brains in." Later, the foreman claimed the employee had his hand in his pocket during the argument, and he thought the worker was going to pull a knife on him. However, another employee who witnessed the altercation stated the discharged worker at all times kept his hands clear of his pockets.

Management's reaction was to fire the employee and refuse to take any action whatsoever against the foreman. Chrysler's position was it ~~would~~ <sup>will</sup> protect its foremen when they're protecting themselves against employees. Negotiations began at noon Wednesday and continued until 5:30 that afternoon, the union demanding immediate reinstatement of the employee and discharge of the foreman, and Chrysler adamantly refusing each demand. The word was then given to union stewards in the plant to inform the workers and walk them out of the shop. After the walkout the union stated there would be no

further negotiations of any kind until the foreman was out of the plant.

The plant remained shut down on all shifts until the first shift Monday morning when employees returned to their jobs as instructed by the union at a special membership meeting Sunday. Chrysler removed the foreman from the plant, and the incident is being negotiated along with ~~numerous~~ numerous other alleged Chrysler violations of a Memorandum of Understanding completed by the company and the union Jan. 16, 1970.

A strike vote will be held Monday, April 27 and negotiations will continue 7 days after that. These steps are being taken to comply with legal requirements and to obtain Solidarity House's official sanction of a strike. Otherwise, no strike benefits can be paid, and the strike leaders could be sued

by Chrysler for damages resulting from the walkout. *If the union is not satisfied with Chrysler's actions when the 14 day "cooling off" period is ended, the plant will be officially struck.*

Meanwhile, the word is out in the plant; any more instances

of management harassment and intimidation and the shop will *immediately* walk out again.