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Interview with Melvin Chrzanowski, Interview 1

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Side 1

Today is July 13, 1982. I am talking with Mr. Melvin Chrzanowski, who works in Sheet Metal and Layout Fabrication at Chevy Gear and Axle. He is a member of Local #235 and lives at 27408 Gilbert in Warren, Michigan.

PP: Why don't you start off by telling me where you were born and when you were born?

CHRZ: Hamtramck, August 26, 1939.

PP: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

CHRZ: One brother.

PP: Just one brother. Has he ever worked at the Gear or any other auto plant.

CHRZ: No, no. Not his forte.

PP: Tell me, is your mother **P**olish, part **P**olish?

CHRZ: Yes, she is. My mother and father are both **P**olish.

PP: Were they born in the United States?

CHRZ: My father was, my mother was not. She came over when she was very young, about six months, something like that

PP: So actually, your mother was born in Poland.

CHRZ: Correct.

PP: Have you any idea what part of Poland?

CHRZ: I have no idea at all. She has told me but I have no recollection of the name.

PP: When your mother's people came here, do you know where they settled?

CHRZ: I'm under the impression that they did settle right in Hamtramck.

PP: They came right from the old country right to Hamtramck.

CHRZ: That is the way I recall it. Whether that is actual or not I really don't know. All that I can remember is the story that my grandmother told me about how my grandfather use to go to Ford Highland Park Plant and she could wave to him from there ~~re~~ home, which was quite a distance, it was just ~~over the~~ ^{open} fields.

PP: What did your grandfather do at the Ford Plant?

CHRZ: I have no idea. My grandfather died before I was born.

PP: I thought you might have heard from your mother. How about your father? ^{where did} His parents settled [?] ~~in~~

CHRZ: West Virginia, originally.

PP: Did your grandfather work in the coal mines?

CHRZ: I really don't know. All I really know is that my grandfather had a tailoring talent. Now, whether he was an actual tailor or if he actually worked as a tailor, that was his talent though. Then, from there they moved Munising.

PP: Do you know how your parents met? Any idea?

CHRZ: I take it, they just lived close, in Hamtramck.

PP: Tell me, when you were growing up, was Polish spoken in your home?

CHRZ: Until I was five years old that's all I spoke. When I was six years old all I spoke was English.

PP: Do you speak Polish, now?

CHRZ: I understand Polish. I can speak a small amount. I would not call myself fluent in any aspect, okay?

PP: No, but you do understand?

CHRZ: If you don't go too fast.

PP: What about, have you taught your children any Polish?

CHRZ: Yes, through what I know, I ^{to} ~~thru~~ 10 and idz do domu spacz (go home to sleep) and stuff like that, which is simple stuff.

PP: Is your wife Polish, or part Polish?

CHRZ: She is ^PPolish. One-hundred percent.

PP: Now, does she speak Polish?

CHRZ: Quite well, better than I can, let's put it that way.

PP: Do you speak to the children in Polish?

CHRZ: Only if we want to say something, but they'll understand 9 times out of 10, just like I did when I was a kid. If you were to say we were going to go to the show, or something, when they were kids, eventually, they catch on. It's just a catch-on type of thing.

PP: How many children do you have? How old are they?

CHRZ: Two boys, 20 and 19.

PP: Have either of them worked at any of the auto plants?

CHRZ: No, my oldest boy just received a job at IBM. The other one is still going to school. No auto plants.

PP: Is that because you influenced them against the auto plants? Or, were they just not interested?

CHRZ: That's it. When I was a kid, I said to myself, ^{as} ~~that~~ my

father would come dragging home, because he worked for Chevrolet Gear and Axle for 43 years. I said to myself, no way am I going to do that. Until I found out that you ~~have~~ ^{got} to have money to exist. I worked for Blue Cross for six years, non-union, and that was the worst six years I have ever experienced in my life. The job was terrific, everything was terrific, but there was no money ^{in it}. And then just from one small experience, my age was against me there, I was too young, I got side-stepped for promotion, because of my age. I had the ability, to my thinking, the person that they installed in the position, one Sunday afternoon called me up and said you'll have to be ~~out~~ work in one-half hour. And I said it's Sunday, I'm not coming to work. He said if you don't come to work today, don't come to work for the rest of your life, because that's the end of your job, your fired. So, who do you have to fight, ^{its} you against the organization. So, I said I don't need ~~any of~~ this. So, that's when I learned a little about the union, a small amount. Now, I know a lot more, studied it.

PP: Let's go back to your father. You said he was with the Gear for 43 years? What kind of work did he do?

CHRZ: He was a pipe-fitter. He was production. It's the same thing, they have a standard, in my small time there, they have a standard way of upgrading people if there is a small ability or they see a small ability, and even if you have no knowledge of what you're going into, if you have a

little bit of initiative, they will help you out, the company will upgrade you.

PP: Besides your father, have you had any uncle or close relative working at the *gear*?

CHRZ: I have one uncle.

PP: Is that on your mother's side?

CHRZ: Yes, that would be on my mother's side. I have a cousin right now, that works there.

PP: What does he do?

CHRZ: He is a side-gear grinding, production. Everything probably has a title, and you can name the title. A janitor is a custodial engineer, but he is still a janitor in my thinking.

PP: Well, let's get back to this Polish aspect again. Do you feel identification with Poland, are you interested in what's going on in Poland? There's been alot about Poland in the last six months in the paper.

CHRZ: I don't identify with Poland, myself.

PP: Do you think of yourself as an American or a Polish American?

CHRZ: I think of myself ~~as~~ purely ^{as} an American. Okay?

PP: Fine, some people don't. They think of themselves as a Polish American, or a Ukrainian American, or whatever it happens to be.

CHRZ: You're stuck with what you're born with. That's the way it is.

PP: You tell me you were born in Hamtramck, how long did you live in Hamtramck?

CHRZ: Through my whole life.

PP: Where did you go to school, elementary and high school?

CHRZ: Detroit, let's go back. I lived in Hamtramck for a ^{grand} total of about six years. One year when I was unknowledgeable and than six years ^{after} when I got married. I went to Mason Public for kindergarten, St. Bartholomew for grades 1-8 and St. Ladislaus, back in Hamtramck again, for senior high school.

PP: So you lived part of the time ~~than~~ in Detroit?

CHRZ: All the time in Detroit.

PP: Do you attend a Polish parish, now? One that is predominantly Polish?

CHRZ: I don't know about predominant. It's Semi-polish. St. Stylvester is the one we're speaking of.

PP: It's quite a modern church. It's on Twelve Mile. Would you call this a pretty strongly Polish area? Are there lot of Polish families in the immediate vicinity?

CHRZ: If you were to go through the parishioner's list, you would probably see 50%, I'm guessing, I don't know.

PP: It's doesn't matter. But, when you say it is semi-Polish I am assuming there are lot of Polish families.

CHRZ: When we first moved in, they used to have a priest that had a little sign under his confessional, that said Polish confessions. But now, there's no such thing. The church has changed.

PP: Do they have a Polish mass, such as, St. Cletus does?

CHRZ: No.

PP: No, they don't.

CHRZ: Maybe, during the week one day, once a year, but as far as I know, no.

PP: When you were growing up, did your parents own their own home? Or did they rent?

CHRZ: Own. They started with the standard live with grandma or their mother, one of which ever, and then move out. Standard operating old-time. I think that's the way it was back in the old days.

PP: They lived with who's parents?

CHRZ: My mother's for a small period of time. A year, whatever, I have no knowledge.

PP: Is this your first home, this one here?

CHRZ: Yes.

PP: How long have you lived in this home?

CHRZ: '64.

PP: That's quite a long time. Then you ^{have} seen the area build^d up. Were there quite a few open fields? Did you build the house, or did you move in as the first owner?

CHRZ: You wouldn't believe this house. What it is now and what it was when I moved in. You couldn't believe it.

PP: You mean because you added on so much?

CHRZ: Correct.

PP: Do you own a boat or a cottage?

CHRZ: I have a boat.

PP: What kind of boat.

CHRZ: A small 14' boat.

PP: Sailboat?

CHRZ: No, just a boat. Just a little dinghy, is what I call it.

PP: Do you fish?

CHRZ: Yes, occasionally. You want to get into technicalities.

hesitate | You can own anything you want but you don't get to use it as long as you ^{are} at Gear and Axle. I have a boat, and if I get to use it once a year I'm doing good and I have to make a pre-arrangement and take time off and the whole set-up.

PP: At least you have it.

CHRZ: I'm ready for the flood *(laughter)*

PP: Well, let me ask you the big \$64,000.00 question, that is what is the date of your seniority?

CHRZ: 6/26/63.

PP: So you got almost 20 years in, right?

CHRZ: Yes.

PP: Have you ever had a parent or parent-in-law living with you?

CHRZ: No, not yet.

PP: Well, let's talk now a little about the beginning of your working career, you referred to it a little earlier. When you were in High School, you said that you went to St. Lad's High School. When you were there what kind of jobs did you have?

CHRZ: When I was there, my classes were orientated for business.

PP: Business?

CHRZ: All business. I had shorthand, typing. My outlook then, because there weren't any, was to be a male secretary. That

was it. That is what I thought I would like.

PP: Now, that is very unusual for 1963. It is not for^{now} it is semi-unusual, but than, it would be most unique.

CHRZ: I thought of it as a possibility, go to Washington, be somebody's secretary. Let them take care of you sort of deal. That didn't work out.

PP: How fast do you type?

CHRZ: Now, or then?

PP: Then.

CHRZ: Top speed was 45. I couldn't do any better on a manual typewriter.

PP: What about your shorthand?

CHRZ: Then?

PP: Then.

CHRZ: Oh, it was poor. But I passed the class, let's put it that way. I wouldn't have the slightest inkling how to do it today, I forgot everything. It was a one year thing, in and out.

PP: Did you take the Greg System of shorthand?

CHRZ: Correct.

PP: What kind of jobs did you have on the outside?

CHRZ: Just the two, Blue Cross and Chevrolet.

PP: But, I mean, when you were in high school, did you do any odd jobs? Did you work at a market or on a paper route?

CHRZ: Yah, I did that, ^(paper route) for two weeks for a kid, and I would never do that again in my life. And I advised my boys never do that, it rained for two weeks when I was the paper boy.

I hated it, it was terrible. I worked for ^{Crawley Millers} ~~Crawling~~ Millers

for four weeks.

PP: What did you do there?

CHRZ: Busboy. That was an experience.

PP: How old were you, you were about 16 years old?

CHRZ: 16 years old.

PP: So actually, how old were you when you started at Blue Cross?

CHRZ: 17. I got out of school on the third of June, and I started work on the fourth. ~~It was one, two, three.~~ It was kind of a nice ^{deal} job, I had the job before I graduated. I still don't know how it happened. I fell in, I was there, and I was working. Very nice, in a sense, for me, because I had extra spending money. It was nice for my folks, because they didn't have to be out late. No vehicle.

PP: Now, what actually did you do at Blue Cross?

CHRZ: I started right from the ground, that was the basement, and I stayed there. ^{worked} In the stockroom, than I went to the mailroom, and than to the Printing Department, that was the ultimate, let's say of the low-class. Everyone up on the sixth floor, we called the high class and down below, that's where I worked.

PP: So after your incident of being called to work on Sunday, as you have referred to before, you just quit, did you?

CHRZ: No, I didn't. I first got the job at Chevrolet. It took me two years to get that job.

PP: So, in other words, you did go in on Sunday, than?

CHRZ: Oh, yeah. I certainly did.

PP: You went in on Sunday because you wanted to keep the job.

CHRZ: When you have one child and no money, you do as you are told. Well, that's my thinking. I've done some things at Chevrolet you wouldn't believe either. With the union.

PP: When you went into Chevrolet, did you get in through one of your relatives, did they tell you when there was an opening?

CHRZ: No, there was ^{a bad} ~~that~~ episode back in, you know it's hard to say this because in '63 they were hiring, in '62 they were hiring, that was the big surge of hiring back then. Every day, every week, they was hiring. The first time I went down to Chevrolet's I had my dad, today, he would still turn around and kick my tail if I remind him of the story. They had a personnel interviewer, whatever you call him, they did remove him, he was selling jobs. And the first time I went down there, I didn't take the job, because I was misinformed. I went in with the idea that I know I am going to work on an assembly line, ~~sleep on~~ ^{live on} the floor, or whatever they're going to tell me to do. But he said, ~~and~~ make less money, and I wasn't making enough money to exist, then, and I said let me go home and I'll get back to you in an hour. I walked, that's where I lived, it was that close. And he said, there's 20 men out there that want this job, do you want it or not? I said, no, I don't want it. And the following, I'd say eight months or so ~~then~~ they called me again. ^A ~~day~~ ₁ day later I put another application in and I got the job. But it was eight months after. I'm trying to be specific.

*Bad
chump.*

PP: When you went in, what did you actually do? I mean what did you actually do, what was your first job when you went in eight months later.

CHRZ: First job, I worked in Plant 1 and I painted machines, I washed and painted machines. If you asked me then what I was doing, I had no idea except washing and painting machines. And later I found out they were gear cutters. I moved those machines, they're no longer there. I know those machines.

PP: So, you stayed there for awhile, then what happened?

CHRZ: I got ~~laid~~-off. And that was the biggest heart break I had ever had in my life.

PP: When was that?

CHRZ: That was in, right around April, May, I really haven't ✓ # that part of my life I went nuts, I didn't know what I was going to do.

PP: What year was that?

CHRZ: 1964.

PP: '64. You were ~~laid~~-off for a couple months?

CHRZ: Three months.

PP: Three months?

CHRZ: Two or three months

PP: After you were ~~laid~~-off, did you collect unemployment?

CHRZ: I did collect unemployment. But I didn't collect it from Chevrolet. I collected it from Blue Cross, which I couldn't understand. It doesn't make sense to me because I went to a better position for more money, and this happened, the compensation system doesn't make any sense

to me. I hate it. I wouldn't want to do it again for no money. I don't understand it, I don't like it, and I don't want it.

PP: Have you been laid-off since.

CHRZ: No, it was like a weeding-out process. That was what I was referring to before, ^{they} they have a system now, whether they still hold to the system or not, I have no idea. I had 89 days, I recall that real well, and the lay-off was the shock of my life. They were working 3 shifts, 20 hours a day if you wanted to, and I got laid-off, I couldn't understand it. But I didn't have the 90 days seniority, which, that's ^{it} there perogative, you find it out later.

PP: After you got back in, what did you do, were you put on painting machines?

CHRZ: No, actually I was moved around a lot for the ^{first} 89 days. I guess, they just put you where ever they needed a body. Laid-off, I got called back, I think it was for four days, five days, I'm not positive on that. ^{when} I got called back and laid-off again, the first thing I did was walked over to the local and I talked to Smitty, who was the president than, Ken Smith, was the president. I recall the name well, nice gentleman. I told him what's going on, I just got laid-off, I'm been off all this time, they called me back, they're still working, I got laid-off again. He said "you really need a job"? I said I wouldn't be here. He said go see this man, he wrote down on a small piece of paper. I went to Plant 6 and all of a sudden I was working at the Forge Plant and that was the biggest

mistake I ever made in my life. If you've ever worked in a forge plant you'd know what I'm talking about.

PP: You mean the heat and the dirt and the noise.

CHRZ: The dirt. I mean they give you a white helmet, indicating that you are a rookie, you are nobody. That's exactly what you feel like. I walked through there with this General Foreman, I found out later, you don't know who you are with, and it was so hot and I took that helmet off and it was black, I didn't believe it. I put the thing back on and I never touched it. It was something else. That was a bad deal.

PP: So, how long were you there?

CHRZ: I think I acquired seniority there, I had ninety-some days, and then I got a telegram from Gear and Axle and I quit in two minutes. It took me exactly 20 minutes to get out of there. I recall.

PP: You didn't have very far to go from the Forge to ~~the~~ Gear and Axle, just around the corner.

CHRZ: That was the nice part.

PP: So, actually you were first in Gear and Axle, than Forge and than back in Gear and Axle again.

CHRZ: And than I worked on the assembly line in Plant 6, that was a blessing.

PP: Doing what?

CHRZ: Assembling front-axles for a truck.

PP: So when did you finally look at that board and see that there was a possibility of quitting.

CHRZ: There was no board. The first ~~date~~^y that I started, I went down to, ^Uuntil today there is no board for job improvement. Actually, that is something that I can not understand, a large company like that. There is no, if you have this and this ability you can apply for this job. You have to go down to personnel.

PP: Well, how do you know?

CHRZ: You don't know, you never know about these jobs. There are people that do know about these jobs, I suppose. Because they don't have a board listing like you said. What I did was, my first day that I was there, or second day, it was really, that was ~~really before~~^{was before} I was laid-off the first time, I went down to personnel, because I did work afternoons and I went there early, and I went downstairs and I put in an application ⁱⁿ for ~~an~~ apprentice. That was done from knowledge ^{that} I acquired from my father, He said, now you can be an apprentice, so that's how I did it or why I did it, and how I did it.

PP: So what year was that?

CHRZ: 1963.

PP: 1963. Right in the beginning. This is ~~right~~^{before} before you got laid-off and ^(before my seniority timing date) before you went over to the Forge and before you came back to Gear and Axle. So, how long did it take from the time that you put in your application ⁱⁿ to the time they accepted you into the apprentice program.

CHRZ: I recall I started in October or November, but I had zero knowledge of what I was doing. I started school in the

Spring term of '64. And that was ^{it.} ~~that.~~

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PP: Was sheet metal your first choice, so to speak?

CHRZ: I had no idea what it was, and most people, if you were to ask them, what ^{is} ~~was~~ a sheet metal man, they would have no knowledge of it, and I had no knowledge of it. I didn't know what it was. It was an apprenticeship, ~~that's~~ all I know. And I understand that if you accepted such a position that you were sort of safe through a four year period ^{of} ~~at a~~ time. That was the secret. Get that year's seniority, get that time in. How you got it, or what you did, or what you had to do to get it that was the secret.

PP: Do you like your work?

CHRZ: Yes

PP: You do?

CHRZ: (Yes, I do, I really enjoy the work. If I didn't enjoy the work, I would probably advance. I like the job but I, just from the people around, I don't know if I'll be able to continue that, I hope, ^{I can} for the next ten years or whatever I need to get out.)

PP: You mean you think they might advance you to some kind of supervision?

CHRZ: No, I had that chance already, right by the riot area and I side-stepped it. That was my own choice.

PP: Would it have meant more money?

CHRZ: I'm assuming, I had ~~no~~ no idea.

PP: What would they have called you if you had taken that.

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CHRZ: A foreman, which to me was a down-grade. Anybody can be a foreman, anybody can. Believe it or not? You could be a foreman, you'd ^{make} be a great foreman. See, your smiling. You have all the qualifications, too. You're a woman, and if you were black you would really make it. That would be two, I'm glad this is going on the tape ^{there's going to} ~~they'll~~ love it at the Reuther.

PP: Have you ever considered a job change? You say you like your work, but have you ever considered going into something else?

CHRZ: Leaving the company or just going into something else?

PP: Leaving the company or going into something else.

CHRZ: I wouldn't have those two diplomas on the wall if I didn't think of going into something else.

PP: Which two diplomas on the wall?

CHRZ: Those two right up there.

PP: What does one say? The one is for what?

CHRZ: Associate of Applied Science the other one is a degree in Arts

PP: And the degree in Arts is from where?

CHRZ: They're both from Macomb.

PP: So, in other words, you like both science and arts. So, for the science one what were you majoring in? What was your primary interest in that?

CHRZ: The reason that I acquired that was from the apprenticeship. That's how I acquired it.

PP: How about the one in the ~~Arts~~.

CHRZ: That was for my original thinking to return to school, was to go for an Engineering degree.

PP: Now, when did you take the work in arts?

CHRZ: Both of those took me six years of studying.

PP: We you taking the work for the arts and engineering the same time you were doing the apprenticeship?

CHRZ: Correct. Well, what happened was, I went to Cass, I went to George Washington Trade, that's the name, than I went to Wilbur Wright for the Tinsmith. So there was ~~three~~^{2 1/2} years of studying, it's a set number of hours required for your apprenticeship. Then in '73 I went back. Actually, I started at Macomb for three-week period right after my apprenticeship, I was bumped to second shift and had to quit school. And that time I took Numerical Control, which I thought was the up and coming, what would be needed, continued education. Don't stop learning. Now, soon as you require a second shift position you find out you have nothing to do ^{(but} at work.)

PP: When you mean second shift you mean the 3 o'clock till 11:30.

CHRZ: Yes, you find you have nothing to do. I could not cope with work, work at home and an outside education, it was just too much, too demanding. My body wouldn't let me do that.

PP: What about since that time? Have you thought about going back to school and taking any courses?

CHRZ: Well, I just finished in '79 and I'm on a hiatus right now.

PP: A wait right now.

CHRZ: Correct. ~~wait~~^{wait} and see. What are the requirements? Do I have to continue? Do I want to do something else?

PP: In other words, possibly than, now, as you've got your Associate's Degree from Macomb you would go elsewhere,

*Cass
Edgewood*

now where would you like to continue, in engineering?

CHRZ: I had seen the handwriting on the wall, and it's just, I don't know ^{what} how to tell you, I don't know how to explain it to you in simple English. Anybody can be an engineer, anybody can be anybody they want to be. ^(Dog barkies) It's just how much time and how much money do you want to involve yourself in to, to acquire this thing. It's the american dream, anybody can do anything they want to do if you got enough money and time to do it.)

PP: And maybe some motivation also.

CHRZ: Yes, you do need that.

PP: What have you thought about what you might like to do? Let's make a hypothetical point that, Gear and Axle might close. Let's look at McClough Steel, for example, This is a very real problem for a lot of people, right now, as of this week. What would happen if this is what is going to happen at Gear and Axle. What do you think you might decide, given the fact that you already have a good start on your education into something else, what do you think you might do? Given the fact that you have two sons, who are grown, presumably are healthy and able to work, and so it's just you and your wife you have to be responsible for?

CHRZ: The position that I have is in my thinking, an ultimate position, because you are not confined to one place, one building, and you have everything you could ask for, outside inside, basement, roof, ceiling, you name it, I'm there.

PP: In other words, you have a lot of variety and freedom within the job situation, and you like that.

the job situation, and you like that. Where as, if you got another kind of job, even though it might be a better job you might be in one room from 9 to 5.

CHRZ: Have you ever worked in a factory?

PP: I've worked at Colgate-Palmolive Peat Company, yes.

CHRZ: Now, that's a factory. It's an experience. I read a book, it was written by a Polish author, and ~~it is~~ his thinking is similar to mine. It's a glorified prison.

PP: What was the book, do you remember?

CHRZ: I don't remember the book I'll have to find it.

PP: I've never seen that book, The Poles, How They Live and Work, by Mark E. Heine. And that is about Poles in this area? Oh, this is in Poland.

CHRZ: Yes, he may not have stated in the exact terminology that I have used, however, that is my thinking.

PP: It is interesting to me, for a man who considers his self as an American, rather than a Polish American, you would go out of your way to read a book about Poland.

CHRZ: I had to do that. That was a requirement, *a class*.

PP: By the way, have you ever considered relocating in another state, if you ever were laid-off from Gear and Axle?

CHRZ: Yes, there would be no hesitation at all.

PP: Really, where would you relocate?

CHRZ: The situation would have to be General Motors or Chevrolet would have to come up to me and say, How would you like to *go* here and work for us?

Relocate PP: I see, in other words, you would want to go in order to keep your seniority and so forth.

CHRZ: Correct. I wouldn't do it no other way. Not in this point and time.

PP: What would you miss most if you did move to another state?

CHRZ: Nothing.

PP: Where would you like to go?

CHRZ: West.

PP: West? What states were you referring to?

CHRZ? Nevada, Arizona, California, not Texas, from what I hear ^{from} ~~an~~ the News.

PP: Do you of any Polish auto workers who have gone, elsewhere?

CHRZ: No, I'm confined. I'm a restricted individual.

PP: And yet you are interested in possibly going, yet you don't know any other Polish auto workers who have gone.

CHRZ: I have a friend of my brother's, works for General Motors, ^{in same capacity.}
 I have no knowledge, I know he has a Metallurgical Degree, I know he travels, and General Motors moved him.

PP: General Motors moved him? But, he was based here.

CHRZ: No, he was based some where else, maybe, Buffalo, I don't know.

PP: In other words, he didn't move, I was really referring to the person who perhaps is laid-off and decides to move to Texas or some place else, who is Polish. Because we know of a lot of people from Michigan, or especially the Detroit area have moved. Does your wife work, what kind of work does she do?

CHRZ: Cashier, let's put it that way. I don't know exactly her title.

PP: Does she work full-time?

CHRZ: No, I don't consider it full-time, she does, how about that?

PP: How many hours does she work?

CHRZ: She works about 30 hours a week.

PP: That's about 3/4 time, I would say.

CHRZ: Yes.

PP: What age do you plan on retiring, any idea?

CHRZ: 55, *maybe "30" is*

PP: Why 55, any special reason?

CHRZ: Just from insurance peoples advisement, now whether it is true or not, no one can say when you are going to retire. I'm saying 55 today, tomorrow I might say 65, President Reagan might say 70.

PP: How many years will you have in, when you are 55.

CHRZ: Probably around 32, I believe.

PP: So, in other words, you are willing to stay over the 30 rather than getting out.

CHRZ: Financially, I'm thinking over 30, at the time I do ~~acquire~~ 30, I might think differently. I would be able to at age 53, I believe.

PP: Well, of course, no one know's what the situation is going to be like at that time. But, if you were ~~laid-off~~, mainly, if some people say the Gear could be phased out, it's possible, unlikely, but possible.

CHRZ: I can't understand the company investing so much money, and then just dropping what ever there ~~is~~ big goal, or big idea is.

PP: You mean, because they are re-doing alot of Plant 8, and so forth. I heard that this morning from one of the workers

that I talked to, because he is working in Plant 8.

Would you at that time, when it came down to the nitty-gritty, would you consider re-training for something else.

CHRZ: With the same organization?

PP: Not necessarily, I mean, because maybe they're wouldn't be enough jobs in Sheet Metal~~ling~~ in other plants, I mean there may be many people ahead of you in seniority, so they would have to take those people first and maybe they couldn't promise you a job.

CHRZ: When I was hired, they told me they wouldn't promise me a job, also. You have to realize that there is no guarantee, there's only two things you can guarantee are death and taxes.

PP: How do you think your family or friends would feel if you retrained into something else?

CHRZ: I don't know. I would consider retraining for anything?

PP: What do you think about a man taking early retirement, say, he gets ^{to be} about 50 and has 25 years in and gets fed up?

CHRZ: I think it's foolish.

PP: Why do you say that?

CHRZ: The agreement goes for 30 years, and your health will allow you, I can't see, ~~why~~ five more years, is very little time to require full benefits.

PP: How do you feel about a man's job being important to his well-being?

CHRZ: If you asked my family, you probably would find out that I think more of ^{the} my job ^{I do} than ^{of} my family. Whether it's true or not, I don't think so, but that's their thinking. It's

Imagine if a new job

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very important, my male chauvanistic mind or whatever
 you'd put it, ^{its} that's a must, I mean that's number 1.)

PP: So at 55, your^t fairly young.

CHRZ: I have a big outlook, though.

PP: So, let's say that your out of a job. You would have a full pension, ~~that~~ is true, you would be the major bread winner, and all this kind of thing. You would have a lot of time on your hands, what would you do at 55?

CHRZ: At 55, I would really consider, I would love to have the possibility of training kids to be Sheet Metal men, how does that sound? What is your study?

*Future
edue*

PP: Adult Education.

CHRZ: Adult Education, there you go, or technical school.

PP: In other words, you would like to go and be a teacher of sheet metal?

CHRZ: ^{Correct} Not mathematics.

PP: No, but the actual practical Sheet Metal worker.

CHRZ: That's correct, and that's what I would like to do.

PP: Do you feel affirmative action has anything to do with job lay-off, or are job lay-off's specifically based on job seniority?

CHRZ: With my limited knowledge, I really don't know. I can't answer that question. Seniority rules, that I know. You can be the best worker in the world, if you got 9 months seniority ^{you're on} around the street, the guy that has 5 years, ten years, he works.

PP: Have you played any kind of role in your Union Local?
 Do you vote?

CHRZ: Yes, always vote.

PP: Do you go to the Skilled Trades Meeting at all?

CHRZ: ^{I used to} Until I found out that is a farce. It's the person with the loudest voice gets the say, and that's as far as it goes. Does that make sense?

PP: Have you ever attended any education classes at the Union Local?

CHRZ: I have two more classes and I could have a Certificate in Labor Studies, how does that sound?

PP: It sounds great. Where did you take those classes, at the Local?

CHRZ: Macomb.

PP: Oh, Macomb, you didn't take any classes the Local gives, like Collective Bargaining, and Grievance Procedures.

CHRZ: No, I do not return to work once I leave the boundaries, if I could help it.

PP: So, what classes than have you taken?

CHRZ: I have taken Arbitration, Labor and the Law.

PP: Now, isn't this inconsistent with the fact that you don't take any part in union affairs, and yet you obviously are interested in . . .

CHRZ: I wanted to learn.

PP: But have you ever thought of putting it to practical use such as running for Committeeman?

CHRZ: I thought of it. It has no value to me. How does the President ^{or anybody} usually get elected? There's usually some kind of favoritisms or fraternities, etc. You could be the best

guy in the world, and if someone who is in a large group says this guy is no good, he doesn't get it, he doesn't step up, does that make sense.

PP: It's not always shall we say what we read about as the idealistic method, democratic method in the history books and the realism of politics is not perhaps what we would prefer.

CHRZ: I have four people to worry about, and three little doggies and that's it.

PP: Tell me have you ever thought, as you seem interested in Labor Studies, have you ever thought of when you were 55 going in for actual work in Arbitration?

CHRZ: That would be a nice position. That particular job could glorify the job and you must have common sense and you must have a little bit of law knowledge, which is difficult, I can't even read some of the law readings, the "where for's," and how come's.

PP: I think what I mean is if your possibly interested in that direction, have you ever thought about going to the people on the Arbitration board in Michigan, and say, when I'm 55 *Edric* I will have been working, I'm taken the Certificate in Labor Studies now, can you tell me what I should do in order to prepare myself for that, should I want to do that.

CHRZ: I've never really thought of it as a position, I have thought of training.

PP: Are you going to finish the Certificate in labor light of the studies?

CHRZ: I don't know. That's the thing that's up in the air. I only have two classes to acquire for the certificate.

PP: Because there is an Arbitration Board here in Michigan, there are people who are specialists in Arbitration, I understand. *(OK - it's a well-paying job)* I was just wondering if you do have an interest in that if it would be to your advantage to find out how to prepare yourself so that by the time you were 55, ~~if~~ you really wanted to go into that, that you would be prepared. That was just a passing thought. If you knew a few years ago, what you know now about economic conditions, would you have gone into the same kind of work, or possibly would you have gone into something different?

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CHRZ: Like I said, I am satisfied because of the variety, there was only one other job in my life that I would want, and that was General Foreman. But I didn't want any of the in-between, I wanted this to that and there is no such thing. Unless, you come from GMI.

PP: What kind of car do you drive?

CHRZ: Chevrolet, an Oldsmobile.

PP: What year?

CHRZ: '79 and '73.

PP: How do you feel about Japanese?

CHRZ: I hate them. Not to the fact, that I wouldn't go to war, they're not making anything better than we are as far, it's just another piece of iron or sheet metal, or whatever

PP: How would you feel if that car was assembled in the U.S., such as the Volkswagen?

CHRZ: It wouldn't make any difference, I would still buy, I personally, would only buy a General Motors car. I am completely brainwashed to General Motors, alright? They make a good car, *its on tape*.

PP: How do you feel about these *Quality of Work Life* circles, are you part of one of those?

CHRZ: Correct, I am.

PP: Do you feel they have any long-range goals?

CHRZ: I have no idea. I just can't believe that the company is allowing it.

PP: Why is that, why do you feel like that?

CHRZ: It's an hour of free time. Diversified thinking, and listen to the other guy's problems. It's good, it's a good thing, but the way it is handled. In our particular *maintenance* surrounding it has not that much value.

PP: Do you see any positive steps in your own little circle?

CHRZ: No, not really. I mean it can only go so far, and than there's this wall there. As far as a man on an assembly line or production worker, I think it's got a lot of value. If he's standing underneath the hole in the roof, and the hole in the roof is dripping water on his head and he's got to stand there to run the machine, and all he wants is the hole in the roof fixed, it has great value, you see, and the only way he'll get to have the hole *in the roof* fixed is through these circles, I can see it. His committee man *'t* can get it fixed. It will get done, I've seen it happen so it's good for them.

PP: What do you think about, the possibility of young people
today, such as your two sons, for example