

Mark
Karpinski

laid off:
E.T.
Pilling
Cavanaugh

Interview with Mark Karpinski, Interview 1
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Side 1,

This is Pat Pilling. I am talking with Mark Karpinski, 2602 Evaline Street in Hamtramck, Michigan. Today, is June 7, 1982. Mark is a member of Local 235 U.A.W. and is in skilled trade.

PP: Mark, can you tell me where and when you were born?

MK: May 26, 1951. St. Francis Hospital in Hamtramck.

PP: That makes you how many years old?

MK: 31 years old

PP Do you have any brothers or sisters?

MK: Yes, I have 4 brothers and 2 sisters.

PP: Are they younger or older than you?

MK: They are all younger.

PP: Any of them work for the plant?

MK: Yes, I have one brother that works in Chevrolet, Gear & Axle, Local 235. He works as a millwright.

PP: Is he still working?

MK: Yes, he is still working?

PP: You mentioned to me before, that you were laid-off. How is it that your brother is still working?

MK: He got the job before I did. He has more seniority.

PP: How many years does he have?

MK: 7 years.

PP: How about you?

MK: I had 5 before I was laid-off in December.

PP: Is your mother Polish or part Polish?

MK: Yes, all Polish.

PP: Did she immigrate?

MK: No, she was born here.

PP: Is she second generation Polish?

MK: Yes, she is second generation Polish.

PP: What about your father?

MK: Same with my father. His father was born in Warsaw. He

He came here after W.W. I. He is second generation also.

PP: Do you know how your parents met?

MK: No, I don't.

PP: Have your parents ever been to Poland?

MK: No, they haven't my grandfather, 24, but that was it.

PP: Which grandfather?

MK: The Karpinski grandfather.

PP: Have you ever been there?

MK: No, I haven't.

PP: Do you have any interest in going?

MK: Yes, I'd like to go. There's other places I would like to go also, if I was in Europe, I would definitely stop in Poland.

PP: Do you have any interest in going to Europe, one day?

MK: Yes, I would like to go there.

PP: You mentioned before we started taping that you were interested in history. I was wondering, have you read anything about the history of Poland?

MK: No, just what's in the news, now. Some things I like to look up and read. But then sometimes I realize how lack I am on the history of Poland.

PP: Do you speak Polish?

MK: No, not at all. When I was in the first grade I was taking the Polish classes that they had at Our Lady Queen of Apostles. I was doing so well in them, that all my other subjects were lack so the nun suggested that I don't take it. My parents and the nun thought it would be better, perhaps to let it go.

PP: How did your parents happen to come to Detroit?

MK: They were born here.

MK: My mother is from Hamtramck and my father is from the Harper and Van Dyke area.

PP: Did your grandfather come directly to this area from Poland or did they settle somewhere else first?

MK: They came directly here.

PP: They didn't stop in N.Y. or Pennsylvania, or something like that.

MK: Maybe just on their way to Detroit.

PP: Your grandfather didn't work in the coal mines?

MK: No, not that I know of.

PP: Do any of your relatives, such as, your father, or uncle or other close relative work at the plant?

MK: Various uncles work in different plants around the city. I have a couple of uncles that work at Fords, my father ^{is Cousin} also works over here at local 235. I have a cousin here at Gear & Axle, that's about it.

PP: Is he active in the union?

MK: I don't know how active with the union he is, he just works in Plant 1.

PP: What does he do in Plant 1?

MK: He works a lathe.

M

PP: Did you say your father worked in the plant?

MK: No, my father was a plasterer like my grandfather and ^{my} uncle. My grandfather was in a pretty bad car accident around 1926 so he couldn't do plastering full-time. He ended up working in _____ 69 _____. He did side contracts _____ 71 _____.

PP: Tell me, with ^PPoland in the news these days, do you feel any kind of identity with Poland.

MK: Lots, [|]alot of pride.

PP: Is this on your own account or because of your grandfather or father.

MK: No, its my own interest.

PP: When did you first get interested in Poland.

MK: More recently, in the last ²3 years. When I was younger I didn't pay any attention to that Old World stuff. When you get around 23 or 24 you start appreciating that stuff. I came to appreciate it especially living in Hamtramck. Its not as much Poland as it use to be. I have [|]alot of pride in Hamtramck and Detroit.

PP: Has the ^SSolidarity movement made a difference?

MK: No.

PP: It isn't just because of the workers' movement, its just Poland in general?

MK: Yes, _____ 87 _____ now its ^SSolidarity and I always knew that the ^Ppolish were freedom loving people and most of them are, so, that's there first thing, there ⁿfreedom. I'm not sure what's going on in Poland. You can hear a lot of stories. I've had friends, Ukrainian friends, who have been to Russia, my age, who said they're 50 years behind in everything, in [|]alot of things. I just know from what my friends tell me.

Polish Id

PP: Do you ever go to any of the Polish ethnic festivals?

MK: I use to go to the downtown one.

PP: They hold them in this area too?

MK: We have one in Hamtramck, now its Labor Day, its alot nicer.

I haven't been to any of the ones downtown recently, they'^{were} ~~re~~ nice but after awhile they all get to be the same. You always see people you don't want to see *down there.*

PP: I've noticed they've had festivals on the east side. There was one fairly recently, I thought maybe you have attended a few.

MK: No, I don't.

PP: Is ther a particular area of Poland that you identify with?

MK: Warsaw. I'm not real clear on that because my grandfather didn't speak English. I didn't speak *P*olish. We ~~didn't~~ ^{never said} speak much to each other. He was alot older, he was an older man when my father was born. He was retired before I was born. He lived till he was about 80 years old.

PP: Your parents both spoke *P*olish and probably when they were children spoke *P*olish in the home. Have you any idea why they didn't try and perpetuate this when you were born?

MK: Like I said, earlier for me, none of the kids took interest in it and my parents never forced them. A lot of my friends, they said they never spoke *E*nglish till they were 6 years old. Now they don't speak *P*olish at all. They understand, but they can't speak it. None of the kids in school used it.

PP: Do you attend a *P*olish parish?

MK: Yes, St. Ladislaus.

PP: Is that the one you always attended?

MK: No, I use to belong to Our Lady Queen of Apostles.

PP: Where's that?

MK: That's on Conant Street. I was baptiszed and made my communion there. Then, I went to Santa Maria. It was an Italian parish. Just the other side of Hamtramck in Highland Park. I went to school there for a couple of years and than back to St. Lad's and finally to Hamtramck High.

PP: Do you belong to any ^Ppolish assoc. or groups?

MK: No, just the Polish Sea League Club my father runs. It's a little bar right here.

PP: The Polish, what, club?

MK: The Polish Sea, like ocean sea, s-e-a.

PP: What does it mean?

MK: They just started a club, like a lot of clubs around in Hamtramck, just for drinking and whatever. It's an old club. The only one in Hamtramck. I know there use to be one in Chicago, but we can't find it, it was for bowling tournaments.

PP: It's primary a drinking place.

MK: Yes.

PP: Do they meet once a week?

MK: No, it's open all the time.

PP: What ^{ich} bar is it.

MK: It's a little club, there's no signs or anything.

PP: Oh, I see, it's an actual club, private.

MK: Private, anyone can come in.

PP: You mean any man?

MK: No, in fact my mother's working there right now.

PP: Oh, is she? Where do your parents live?

MK: They own this house, now they rent this flat downstairs, towards the back. Below where I am right now, is the man who used to

own the house, in the storefront. It used to be a candy-store, now its a place for racetracks. He's Polish too.

PP: You rent this from your parents? They own the whole building? Did they own their own home when you were raised?

MK: No, we rented all the time.

PP: Oh, this is the first home they own.

MK: We've probably lived here 20 some years now, they didn't buy it till maybe 12 years ago.

PP: That's your car outside isn't it?

MK: It's a ⁷⁹ Chevy. I was loyal.

PP: Are most people in the plant loyal?

NK: No, I see where a lot of them aren't. 166
Somewhere along the line I see a solution. I can see why too. Before I couldn't understand it now I do. As long as they work, somewhere, sometimes they get bitter about things and they don't want to buy there car. I use to politic against them and say what are you doing buying a Chrysler or Ford? I couldn't understand, now I do, especially after they made some concessions.

PP: What about foreign cars, does anyone ever buy a foreign car?

MK: My brother, he's always buying Toyotas.

PP: How do you feel about that?

MK: Okay, I use to growl at him, but not anymore. My other brothers, infact, everyone else in the family bought GM cars. I was always against a foreign car bid, but I keep looking at those 181 ^{Lotus?} from Italy.

PP: Fancy car.

MK: Fancy foreign sports car.

PP: F

Carl import

PP: Tell me a little bit about your work life from the beginning when you were in high school, what kind of work did you do?

MK: In high school, I worked in the market. Right on the next corner, first I worked in the produce aisle when I was 12-13 and by the time I got in high school, I didn't work there any more and later on I went to work on the ~~new~~^{meat} market side, one building, separate owners and I worked there a couple of years. I worked ^{as a page} in the library in high school, also, in Hamtramck High I did a lot of printing. Senior year I was working in printing. Then, I went off to college. I went to Northern Michigan for a semester. And the summer after high school, I worked the Wayne County Road Commission and my first summer there, I got hurt pretty bad. I almost lost my foot from a lawn mower blade. It delayed me from going to school until January. I didn't do too well my first semester there. I was away from home and kind of wild. Then I went to Macomb. First year for liberal arts and then I switched back to printing, because they have a good printing system there. I finished up there. I didn't get my associates degree because I didn't take typing and stuff like that. I worked for a short while after that in a print shop while I was going to Wayne State University. I think I got as far as junior status and that would've been about 1973 when I stopped.

PP: Were you in [?] E.L.L. College of Lifelong Learning or Liberal Arts?

MK: No, just Liberal Arts. I was in Education ^{really} because I was going to be a print shop teacher. And then around 1973 I just got fed up with school, I guess. Dropped out, right towards the

end of my junior year. I had junior status after all my credits were added up and subtracted from the different schools. In the meantime in the summer, I was working for Wayne County Road Commission. I did everything for them, I enjoyed that. I was outside and it was nice, than I tried to get into printing, but at the time the industry was down. Around 74-75 I went to work for the city of Hamtramck. I worked for them ~~about~~ a year, year and a half, till about '77, than I went to work for Gear & Axle. I was just laid-off from Hamtramck. First time I was ever laid-off. First person ever laid-off in the city of Hamtramck. I was off for about a month and a half. It was a job, I never thought I would ever work in a factory and it came up, I tried it, and it was okay. Working on the line.

PP: What did you do on the line?

MK: I was an inspector. It was the first inspector's job on the Gear & Axle assembly line.

PP: You mean you went right from the street to being an inspector?

MK: Yes.

PP: Isn't that sort of unusual?

MK: No, it's just the same thing as production. You still have to do the same amount of parts. It's no different. It's supposedly easier. You have to make sure the quality is there all the time. I always tried to take pride in it.

PP: Have you ever thought about going back to school and following in your printing?

MK: Sure, all the time, not in printing. I've been in that too long already.

I don't know what I would like to do. If I went back to Chevrolet, I'd have seniority in skilled trade.

PP: Let's go back to when you were an inspector. You were an inspector of actually what?

MK: The axle.

PP: And how long were you doing that?

MK: 51 weeks.

PP: And then what?

NK: Then, they switched me to axle shaft job that would be the shaft that holds the lugs. ~~62-65?~~ *several words not clear.*

PP: And then what?

MK: I was on for a few weeks. I wanted days, I was on afternoons that whole time which I disliked a great deal. So I couldn't bump on days in inspection. So, the committeeman said I could go off of inspection and go ^{night to} ~~on~~ production. I'd do anything to get on days. So I went to the cage truck job (276) and he put me on the long tube and I thought I was going to die.

PP: Can you describe that?

MK: They weighed about 26 pounds, but I was only an inspector pulling the cable most of the time in the shaft and they put me on that job, and I just wasn't ready for it.

PP: What is a long tube?

MK: It's just a tube that the carriers are attached to and than they put the phlange^s and the brakes on. They put me on the big job, the first couple of days I was ready to quit, but I stuck it out. I did that for two or three months than I got called into maintenance. I was a millwright apprentice E.I.T.

Employee in Training. And I did that for a little over 2 years before I got cut back to that same job on the truck.

PP: What is the difference from an apprentice and an employee-in-training?

MK: An apprentice, I guess you have to take more classes, plus you become a journeyman a lot sooner. An employee in training is, it's all worked together through the union. I know their have to be a certain amount of apprentices. I'm not sure if the government is involved with employee in training, or what.

PP: What, part of your salary is paid by the government?

MK: That I'm not sure. I know that the government and General Motors have certain programs. I think college students used to come in, I don't know if they have them anymore.

PP: So, actually you were training to become a millwright.

MK: Right.

PP: How long did this training take?

MK: For me, before I get my journeyman's card, I think anywhere from 6-8 years. Where an apprentice, ^{it} 3-4 years, he gets his card.

PP: When did you get your journeyman's card?

MK: I didn't. After four years you get an S, you become an E.I.T.S. Same as the journeyman, you have all journeyman pay, everything. Until after so many thousands of hours you work then you get your journeyman's card. It's the same thing for an apprentice. He has to work so many hours.

PP: What is your status now?

MK: Now, I'm just a production worker, laid-off. If I was to be called back tomorrow I would go back, probably in production.

Work

I always tried to do the best job I could, plus you get to think, I liked that. It's something different every day as a millwright, always, even being a millwright on the floor in certain plants, you work more, there's something different.

Side 2

Layoff/Trade

MK: As a millwright I enjoyed it a great deal because I got to use my brain, I guess. When I was back on production, it was a little different. If I went back to that and I knew I wouldn't get into skilled trades I would definitely go back to school and look for something else to do.

PP: Have you thought now about going back to school since your sort of doing nothing?

MK: Well, I don't think you're allowed to go back to school and collect unemployment. I'm not sure *about that*.

PP: Have you thought of looking into it because I've heard some workers have gone to school, I know that you're not allowed to take a regular job, but I have heard of people going to school. Now, didn't they have this TRA?

MK: I just missed out on that also. I think I got one TRA check when I was laid-off last summer and that wasn't much at all. They keep changing that TRA so often that I'm not sure anybody knows what's going on with that anymore.

PP: So, you really haven't looked into the fact whether or not you could go back to school.

MK: No, I guess I'm just waiting to have ^{the} horse in my hand, I have been working since I was 12 so the six months that I have been off, ^{→ have} mixed emotions about it.

I guess I would still be in line, if they ever called back millwrights. There was a few laid-off, I think I would be one of them. I hope to be one of them.

PP: In other words, you got so far in this millwright program, and then you went back to production, did you?

MK: No, I was cut back.

PP: Were you given a choice, either get laid-off or get cut back?

MK: No, if I would have had my "S", I would've had a choice.

PP: When did you get that, what year did you get your "S"?

MK: I didn't. I was a year short of the "S".

PP: So they just cut your back off the program, back to production.

MK: If I was a journeyman, or if I had my "S", I would've had a choice.

PP: So what kind of production did you go back to?

MK: My old job on cage truck.

PP: When were you laid-off?

MK: December 4, 1981.

PP: You have certain benefits for a while, right?

MK: I just got done with a 13 week extension. My 13 week extension was up just a couple of weeks ago.

PP: How many benefits do you have?

MK: I get every two weeks from M.E.S.C. \$394.00. That's the unemployment and then I get sub-pay which comes out to about \$130.00 every two weeks.

PP: Have there been any more benefits?

MK: I still have sub benefits left, and 13 weeks left which would take me up to Labor Day of unemployment left. I'm not sure

about what happens after that.

PP: You mean when they cut you off? So what are you going to do when it runs out?

MK: Look around, I guess. I've been pretty lucky when it comes to getting jobs.

PP: What kind of job do you think you can get?

MK: I don't know. I didn't even think of it. Usually, I had high paying jobs, whatever job I worked at, even in high school and in grade school. I always made more money than anybody else.

PP: What would you call a high paying job now?

MK: Well, my job I had as millwright was high paying. Right up around \$12.00 an hour.

PP: Oh yes, that is high.

MK: Even when I worked for the town, all those summers, I was out of high school, I was making \$5.00 an hour in 1969. That's great for anybody, especially if ^{somebody} your just out of high school. I always came across good jobs.

PP: You have seniority now at Gear & Axle, how do they count it, since you've been both E.I.T. and apprenticeship.

MK: I have three years towards millwright managing and five years seniority in the plant.

PP: What about if you wanted to get a job back with the County 95 because you worked with them before, would you have any good chance?

MK: I don't know. That would be a possibility.

PP: Do you like your work, the work you do in the plant? The millwright? ^{work}

MK: Millwright work I enjoyed a great deal. You worked hard sometimes, sometimes you don't, it depends what the circumstances were.

PP: Since you are under 35 now, have you ever thought about changing your job completely?

MK: Yes, ~~Y~~ always think about that. I don't know. Teaching always keeps coming back to my mind.

PP: Teaching printing as you mentioned earlier?

MK: No, not so much printing. It would probably be history or sociology or something like that. Or just going completely different, go to school for theatre or something, I'm not sure.

PP: Have you ever thought about relocating in a different state? Would you be interested in that?

MK: I like the city, I don't like the suburbs too much. Maybe in Las Vegas or New York City, I don't know. I'm not sure. I like Las Vegas, I like the idea of being a dealer maybe, that would be kind of romantic, or whatever, but, I like the big city and Detroit's kind of rated that. I don't think I'd move out of Detroit or ^{even} Hamtramck.

PP: You mean you would miss being out of this area?

MK: Yes, I like this area a lot.

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

MK: Naturally, my friends and parents and family and living this whole lifestyle that I have. I like the outdoors, I like to go out of state, out in the country.

PP: Do you fish?

MK: I deer hunt every year. One year I had about 17 days up there and that was ^{just} about enough. I get itchy for the city after awhile.

PP: What is it about the city that you like?

Rebecca

MK: I don't know. It's faster. I got to hear the fire engines roll down my street, they come blasting through here because I live right here on the fire route. If they came by right now you would have to turn off ~~your~~^{the} tape recorder, it would be just too loud. I like the noise, I like to be in the city. I like everything about it.

PP: I see you like music, from all the records that you have. What kind of records do you like, you have a mixture there, I can see.

MK: I was in the ~~English~~ invasion, you know, the Rolling Stones, the Who all that and recently its been Caribbean ^{reggae} music and mostly to Classical, I've been listening exclusively to Classical music the last 3-4 years. I just mellowed out, I guess.

PP: Yes, I can see, you got varied records. What is that, Bob Marley, one record, than you got Tchaikovsky ~~Number~~ Symphony ^{Number} 4, that's quite a range of music.

MK: It depends on my mood, what it's like. Today, it was ~~reggae~~ day at 1:00, on WDET, they have a ~~reggae~~ program, that's what I like to listen to there.

PP: Do you know of any ^PPolish auto workers who've gone to find work in another state?

MK: Not personally, I don't know any.

PP: Actually, how many years of school have you had?

MK: Twelve years, through high school and 4-5 years of college which added up to junior status.

PP: How did you get your first job at Gear & Axle?

MK: A friend of my father's brought an application and he turned it in, I believe. I don't know if they just gave them out to

anybody, that was the right procedure, but I got an application in and they hired me. I guess they were hiring at the time and I got hired.

PP: So, actually what year were you hired?

MK: January of 1977.

PP: Do you know the exact date?

MK: January 17, 1977.

PP: Most people know the exact date. ^{MK yes you have to.} Do you have any idea, hoping that you will be called back or get some other kind of job soon, have you ever thought about maybe what age you might want to retire? I know it's a long way off at this point in your life, but you must hear the older men talking about it, and times have changed.

Actual MK: I like " 30 years and out, I'd hoped it would be 25 and out by the time I'm ready to go.

PP: You like 25 and out, not 30 and out. That was my next question whether you were going to say longer than 30 and out.

MK: No, I would go the first day I was ^{id be} ~~in~~ legible. I wouldn't hang around, I wouldn't be like that, I don't know circumstances would be different sure, if I'd be married and have kids, or whatever. It's hard to say what you would do that far in the future.

PP: Right, it's a long way off. Actually, how many times have you been laid-off?

MK: You mean just Chevrolet?

PP: Yes.

MK: Just for the occasional weeks in changeover last year and I missed them all up till then. I have other friends that were off for quite awhile from there that were on production

and that was it, till recently. I mean the~~re~~^{se} was always the rumors but they always seemed to miss me until this last one.

PP: How do your folks feel about you being laid-off? What is their reaction to it?

MK: They keep thinking that I will be called back and I keep thinking that also.

PP: What about your friends?

MK: My friends, some of them are envious,

PP: You mean the ones that are working are envious?

MK: Well, sort of, not envious to the point of jealousy, but kind of "lucky dog being laid-off". They all have families and stuff and I don't. For me it's kind of ideal all I got is a car payment.

PP: You can manage your car payment?

MK: Sure, I can manage everything.

PP: Your lucky, it isn't as much as your folks own the apartment.

MK: ^{well,} I pay rent.

PP: Right, now but if things got a little difficult when your benefits were cut off you'd be able to live

MK: I'd find something to do. I'd find a job right away.

PP: How do you really feel about being laid-off?

MK: In some ways I like it. You don't have to get up 6 o'clock in the morning. In the wintertime you get kind of wacky being closed up all the time, especially this past one it was so terrible. But now that it's nicer, I'm coaching

baseball, the Pony Leaguers and I get out a little more.

I don't have a lot of money to go out and do a lot of things I probably normally would do.

PP: It affects your social life, doesn't it?

MK: Somewhat, a great deal. But it's okay. I realize all that. It's a learning experience.

PP: What do you mean by that?

MK: I've been pretty frivolous with my money at various times. I might tend to, when I go back to work be a little more cautious.

PP: Do you find yourself budgeting now?

MK: Yes, I do. I just don't do a lot of things I use to do.

PP: What kind of things?

MK: I don't go to as many movies, but I see movies anyway, I like to watch movies a lot because I have the cable and I like to watch all the sports and I don't go to as many games as I use to. I don't go on as many dates as I use to.

PP: Do you have a regular girlfriend?

MK: No, no, no, not a regular one.

PP: What do you ~~think~~^{feel about} of a man taking early retirement because of being laid-off and being fed up with being laid-off and retiring quite early? Say he's got, say he started in the plant when he was 20 and his 30 years were up when he was 50 but he keeps getting laid-off even with all that seniority? Even if he isn't laid-off and decides to take early retirement, how do you feel about that?

MK: If you got your 30 years you should go. But then it's not for me to say, everyone's situation is different, that guy who started when he was 20 and he's 50 now, he might have two kids

in college, or something and he's got to chew up all that over-time and work all that. So, everybody's different. A lot of them are living out in the suburbs with ^{500 a} \$600 payments a month, they don't have any business retiring, so, I don't blame them for that.

PP: So, you don't own a boat or a cottage or anything like that?

MK: No, I don't. It's just me.

PP: Do you feel that affirmative action had anything to do with job lay-offs or is it strictly based on seniority?

MK: When it comes to lay-off, it's strictly on seniority.

PP: Have you played an active role at all in the union?

MK: I vote all the time. I never ran for anything.

PP: Never had any particular interest in working in the local?

MK: No, not really. I don't know if I'd be any good because I would probably be for the radical side, I think. I was like that in high school.

PP: In what way?

MK: Taking no crap from nobody. I don't know if I'd be able to deal with everybody. I don't know if I'm that type of person. I like to blow off steam and yell and scream a lot.

PP: What does it mean actually when a person in an automobile plant uses the word "deal", isn't there a particular meaning for that word?

MK: Depends on how it is used, I don't know what you mean.

PP: I just heard there ~~is~~ was a special meaning for the word. Maybe somebody told me it was doing favors for one person in return for doing favors for you. Have you ever heard that?

MK: I ^{am not familiar with} never heard that at all.

PP: Have you taken any of the education classes at the union local?

MK: Not through the local, just the classes I was required to take for millwrighting.

PP: What kind of classes were they?

MK: Just things that pertained to millwright theory. I didn't get alot of classes because you have a certain amount of time. I went and than I didn't go. I was a little more relaxed with E.I.T.'s I believe. I put it off as long as I could, then I was going then I got laid-off.

PP: Tell me if you did have a family and ^{had} children how would you feel about their education, would you want them to go on to college or would you not want them to?

MK: I'd let them do what they ^{w'd like} want to do.

PP: How do you feel about them going into the plant, for example?

MK: I don't know. I'd like to they would be more sharp and do something else, but if that's what they wanted to do that would be fine with me.

PP: If you'd known a few years ago what you know now about economic conditions in 1982, would you try a different kind of work?

MK: I don't know. If I was 19 years old I probably would've went into the service.

PP: Why is that?

MK: The way things are around here now, that's probably what I would've done. At the time I was 19 years old though it was in the middle of Vietnam War and not too many people were anxious to go over there. I might have done that too..

PP: Were you in the service at all?

Children - school job

MK: No, I wasn't. I had a bad foot injury.

PP: You mentioned though that before about Toyota's, do you have any other feelings about foreign cars, and foreign cars being made elsewhere and being shipped over here, do you think it has hurt the Americans *Auto Industry a lot.*

MK: I'm sure it has because they are obviously competitive with their cars. I had a girlfriend that had a Toyota and it was a well built car, I drove it. It was a good car, I'm not saying that. My friend down the street, ~~he~~ had a Fiat, the workmanship on that car was excellent, especially on the Fiat. I'm not familiar with the rest of those cars. It was good, a nice car to look at. All the cars are nice to look at over here.

PP: How do you think someone would react ^{if} to someone ^{drive} driving a foreign car into the union local parking lot?

MK: *just impale* I wouldn't, I used to have that attitude, "What are you doing driving that foreign car, but I don't think anyone in the local should be driving anything ^{other} over than what they make. I know that restricts them but ^{there} their in a different position than just the regular worker, than the guy who says I'm fed up with Chevrolet and I'm fed up with Oldsmobile, and I'm going to buy Lincoln.

PP: Your's is a what?

MK: Chevrolet Caprice Classic, 1979. I'm going to have to keep it for awhile.

PP: Tell me would you feel different if foreign cars were assembled in the U.S., does that make a difference?

MK: No, I don't think so.

PP: How do you think you would feel if you were permanently laid-off?

MK: I could deal with that. I would just go on to something else.

PP: But your not sure what?

MK: I'm not sure what. They make it pretty hard for you not to want to leave, you get a pretty good wage, especially when they were working 6-7 days a week. Republics^{are} are around now, so.

PP: If you knew you were going to be permanently laid-off would this make a difference in let's say looking for getting some retraining ?

MK: I would immediately go back to school. I'd get some kind of job even if it was rough.

PP: Where would you go to school, would you go back to Wayne?

MK: Probably, that's where I would go back to, ^{Wayne State} I like the city around here.

PP: Do you think people should be trained for more than one kind of job? Have you thought about that? If you were a high school graduate today, 18, and you were going out in the work force and you had some training in something, do you think it would be better to have some training in a couple of different types of work, considering the fact that a person ^{can} ~~may~~ get laid-off?

MK: I don't know. It would depend on the kid. It's just like when you are in college when your 18 or 19, I mean I changed six different times and the same thing with your child, you have to find a job that you like. You can be trained in high school for

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like I was. I took printing then I went to college and took printing. It just didn't work out. It would depend on the individual, I imagine.

PP: How do you feel about these quality of work life circles they have now in the plant?

MK: They're probably very ^{good} fair.

PP: Have you participate in any?

MK: I just started to participate. They had them in isolated places around ~~the~~ different plants. It seems like now all of a sudden you come to ^{us, the} workers and say give us a hand. Now they listen to us, before it was just the plantation type, you do this, you do that, I don't care, I'm the boss, you just do it. Now, all of a sudden they realize maybe the worker's do have something to say, which is good. It's probably good.

PP: Do you think they have a long-range use?

MK: ^{I don't know} No, cause I heard it wasn't worth it. I have a couple of friends who said they liked it, I was indifferent towards it at first. If you have to, you have to. It's just like any thing else in the shop.

PP: Were they voluntary?

MK: No, they kind of made you go to them. You could go there and just sit there, or you could go there and contribute. It seemed like it was unnecessary, why should you even have to have it, it's alright though, you have to start somewhere, so why not there.

PP: How would you rate the importance of a man's job to a man's feeling ^{about} by himself, ^{Do} you think it's very important that a man have a steady job, above and beyond the fact that he needs it,

Of course, he has to have money to eat. Do you think it sort of contributes to the self image of the worthwhile individual?

MK: Yes, it should. For me yes it does. I sit here being laid-off so I say it's about time you got back to work and do something, but I could just as easy marry into money and sit home all the time and that wouldn't bother me either (laughter).

PP: Some people say that in the Polish family that the man works hard and brings home the paycheck. Did your parents, especially your father, have that sort of pattern?

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MK: Yes, definitely. Even today if I'm out drinking the night before he's calling me, get into work. That's one of the things he loves, never be late no matter what you did the night before you had better be there at work and some of it rubbed off. I go to work and do my job, and I would always try to do the best I could. But my father is still doing it. You have to be [?] to work.

PP: Now that you're laid-off, you said if you married money you wouldn't mind sitting home, in other words, somehow or another you don't quite have, some of it rubbed off on you, apparently, it didn't completely rub off on you. *If you could adjust to another life style.*

g've adjusted to this layoff.

MK: Oh, sure. I could adjust to most anything. I'm ready to go back to work, tomorrow.

PP: What about some of your friends and an adjustment to lay-off? You must have several friends who are laid-off, don't you?

MK: Immediate friends, just a few. A couple of them would like to get back to work, because a couple of them want to get married.

PP: Oh, they aren't married now?

MK: Most of my friends are, just the few that aren't.

PP: Now, you seem to keep busy with listening to music, reading and coaching.

* MK: I'm on the school board in Hamtramck, also.

PP: You're on the school board, are you?

MK: Yes.

PP: What do you do on the school board, just go to meetings?

MK: Go to meetings and board kind of stuff.

PP: What do they do, the ones that are unmarried, do they just keep busy with different activities?

MK: They keep busy the same way that I do.

PP: Are they Polish?

MK: Yes, they are.

PP: From Gear & Axle?

MK: Couple of them are, yes. Some of them are from other industries around here.

PP: Would you like to say anything, yourself, about how you feel as an auto worker in the 1980's about the future. How do you feel, for example, that robotics ~~are~~ some of the new technologies ~~that~~ are going to affect the auto industry, affect your job, possibly in the future?

MK: I don't think they would be able to do it without any people at all. I see where they ^{put} in whole jobs that they did the robot turn. They've added as much as they can, ^{They} you still need people to run them. For me, if I was as a millwright, it would be different, it would almost be like more work, but just as a regular production worker. You're always going to have the workers I ^{I'm sure} ~~don't think~~ ^{not} it's going to be all robots some day.

MK: They'll try and do as much as they can. I imagine if they put the robots in than they can do a better job than the person can sometimes. I'm sure in some instances it is and in some instances it isn't. But then you still have to have the people inspecting. How would it affect me? If I went back to the shop it would be skilled trades in mind and if not I would leave then. I wouldn't stay on production all the time. It would be just wasting my talent and energy just to be on that.

PP: How do you consider yourself as a member of skilled trades then?

MK: I'd like to if they had me back. I always had this thinking of skilled trades in mind.

PP: But your classified as what?

MK: A production worker right now.

PP: What about the role of union with all these lay-offs right now, there's not that much they can do, but on the other hand how do you feel about the concessions that ^{have} had to have been made.

MK: Even though I'm laid-off, I voted against them and I dislike them a great deal. I guess you'd say I'm bitter. Everybody says I'm crazy cause it's affecting my job and we have to take them. I don't think we have to take anything. We earned all that we had in that last contract. I would've conceded the fact that just sign the old contract the '79 contract. I would've done that much. That's as far as I was willing to go. But all these concessions they made out, I'm bitter towards them. And I don't know if I went back to work how it would affect me.

*Union
Bureaucracy*

PP: But they would take you back to work based on your seniority.

MK: I mean my attitude when I go back in there. It might be different. We've fought for those.

PP: On the other hand, the concessions, supposedly cost more jobs.

MK: I'm still off and I was one of the last ones laid-off. I think they just called back 80 people. A neighbor down the street got called back, about my age. And he went back, he was laid-off from February. And I have another friend, he was laid-off in January and he hasn't gotten any word yet either, so, I haven't been in the shop. (I was just so against the concessions that I didn't ^{even} want to know what they were because I just didn't feel we should concede one thing. To me it seems like their's a precedence like anytime they want they can come in and say, well, we've got to have this and you just have to concede to it. It's something about maybe the fact that I'm Polish.)

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