

LARRY SHARNOWSKI
(cutter grinder)
(EIT)

This is Pat Pilling. The date is June the 10th,
1982. I am talking with Mr. Larry Sharnowski who
lives at 5538 Hartlein in Warren, Michigan. Mr.
Sharnowski is a cutter/grinder at Chevy Gear and
Axle and a member of Local 235.

Interview with Larry Sharnowski, Interview 1
Date of Interview: June 10, 1982
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Interviewer: Pat Pilling
Transcriber: Diane Roth
Begin Tape 1, Side 1

PP: Mr. Sharnowski, could you tell me when you were born and where you were born?

Sharn: Born in Maple City, Michigan, September 26, 1931.

PP: Where is Maple City?

Sharn: It's the northern part of the Lower Peninsula.

PP: Is there quite a large Polish community there?

Sharn: No, it's, ~~I would say~~, half and half. I was born and raised on a farm.

PP: How big is Maple City?

Sharn: (laughing) Maple City's probably^s got eighty people.

PP: It really is quite small. What's the largest town near there?

Sharn: Traverse City.

PP: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Sharn: Yes, I have one brother and two sisters. They still all live up there.

PP: Is your mother Polish or part Polish?

Sharn: Her background is Polish. She was born in this country, though.

PP: Were her parents both Polish?

Sharn: Yeah.

PP: How about your father?

Sharn: Same thing. They were born in this country, he was born in this country and both his parents were Polish.

PP: Where did they meet? Do you know?

Sharn: I don't know. They lived in ^{the} general area on a farm up there.

PP: Could you tell me, is your wife Polish or part Polish?

Sharn: Yes, she's Polish and her parents are Polish people.

PP: Is she from this area?

Sharn: Yes.

PP: Was she raised in Hamtramck?

Sharn: In Detroit.

PP: Could you tell me a little bit about your children? We talked about those ~~also~~ a moment before.

Sharn: I have three boys and a girl. The boys are; one is ten, one is twelve, one is sixteen. The girl is twenty.

PP: How would you feel about them working in the plant?

Sharn: I think as far as the boys, they would have a good opportunity, if there was any available jobs. There isn't none available in any

Sharn: plant now.

PP: Could you tell me, did your father or ^{an} uncle
or ~~other~~ close relative ever work in one of
the plants?

Sharn: My father worked in a plant in Muskegon
before he was married.

PP: An auto plant?

Sharn: Gosh, I don't even know. He was in a plant,
though. It was some kind of shop where he
mentioned it before. He saved enough money,
they bought a farm and made a living on a
farm.

PP: Do you have any relatives working in any
auto plants now in Detroit or elsewhere?

Sharn: No, I don't think so. I don't have no relatives
in Detroit, anyway.

PP: How do you, yourself, feel about Poland? Do
you identify with Poland? Do you feel Polish?
Do you feel Polish-American or do you just
feel American?

Sharn: I feel American. I'm glad I'm not in Poland.

PP: Some people call themselves Polish-American
if they do have Polish background. But
you don't feel quite that?

Sharn: No.

PP: How do you feel about the Solidarity movement?
Do you have an interest in what the workers
are doing over there? Or do you feel a need
to know?

Sharn: It surely isn't right for the people. If
they try to organize and then they're stopped
by other people, that isn't right. In my
opinion, it isn't civilized the way the
people are living there. I don't know how
to put it in other words. I think it's more
like Communist-run. It's what it is, isn't
it, right now?

PP: Yes, they do have a Communist government.
Have you any particular interest in any
part of Poland? Do you have relatives in
any part?

Sharn: No.

PP: Your parents or grandparents don't keep up
with anyone?

Sharn: No. They were all American born. I think
it was the great-grandparents that originally
came from Poland.

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PP: Your great-grandparents. So, in that case,

PP: you would be what one would consider fourth generation. Were your grandparents born here, then? Your mother's and father's parents? Do you know?

Sharn: I know there was some. *My mother's father born in Poland.*

PP: But you're not quite sure. When you were being raised in Maple City, you said there were a number of Polish people there. Did they have any sort of Polish celebrations or organizations?

Sharn: No. They have ~~the~~ ^{the} Polish festivals. That's the closest thing.

PP: Oh, they do have the Polish festival?

Sharn: They just started it recently.

PP: It's not when you were growing up?

Sharn: No. We had Polka dances.

PP: You did have those when you were young?

Sharn: Yeah.

PP: So there was some feeling of a Polish community, then.

Sharn: Yes, Polish weddings. Everybody looked forward to that.

PP: What made you come here?

Sharn: For the job. Strictly for a job. I never did plan on staying here. Before I knew it,

Sharn: I had too much time here and couldn't leave it behind.

PP: Do you attend a Polish parish?

Sharn: No, it's mixed.

PP: Do you belong to any Polish organizations?

Sharn: No, not really.

PP: What do you mean, not really?

Sharn: Well, if there's a picnic or something like that.

PP: I see, you mean an informal group. I meant some kind of a Polish club.

Sharn: No, I don't belong to that.

PP: You mentioned Polish weddings. This means that you like to go to quite a number of them?

Sharn: Well, in Maple City area, when there was a wedding, even if we weren't invited, they had a dance after the reception, which most of the town gathered for that.

PP: Did you have a Polish wedding?

Sharn: Oh yes.

PP: Can you describe it to me a bit. It'd be interesting.

Sharn: Everybody eats all they can and drink and dance until they can't go any further. And then they go home and sleep it off.

PP: Did your parents own their own home when you were raised?

Sharn: Yeah, they did.

PP: Was that quite important to them, that they have their own home?

Sharn: Yes. The way my father described it, he worked in a shop to earn enough to buy the farm and home. And that's where they made a living after that.

PP: You say he worked in a shop. What kind of work did he do?

Sharn: I never did talk too much about it. I know he did work in Muskegon when he was young. But, he stayed there just ^{for} a few years and then moved to the farm.

PP: How big is the farm?

Sharn: 180 acres.

PP: What did he grow on it?

Sharn: A little of everything.

PP: What was the primary crop?

Sharn: Primary crop was potatoes, I think ^{for selling}. We had some cattle, pigs, and a little of everything.

PP: Is this your first home or did you have one before this?

Sharn: No, I had a income home. I lived in one of

Sharn: the units and I rented out three of the units.

PP: How many years have you been in this one?

Sharn: We've been here fifteen years.

PP: Do you have anything like a cottage anywhere?

Sharn: No.

PP: A boat?

Sharn: I have just a fishing boat. If I have time, I go out on Lake ^{St. Clair} ~~Sinclair~~.

PP: You keep the boat here?

Sharn: Yeah, the trailer right there.

PP: What kind of fish do you like to fish for?

Sharn: Walleye.

PP: I hear the walleye are very good this year. Especially in Lake Erie.

Sharn: They're plentiful, too.

PP: Much more than before.

Sharn: Oh yes. Every year it's a little better since they stopped the commercial fishing in the early part of the '70s.

PP: Actually, how many of your children live with you? You said one is in college, right?

Sharn: Yeah. They all live at home, though.

PP: Oh, I see. The one that's in college lives

PP: at home also. Where does she go to school?

Sharn: U of D.

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

Sharn: No.

PP: You said you had, was it one brother and three sisters?

Sharn: One brother and two sisters.

PP: Have any of them ever worked in a plant at all?

Sharn: The one brother came down and worked at Chevrolet, also. I think he worked there for ^{about} ten months. He was determined to make it up north and he went back and he started his own business.

PP: What about the girls? Did they ever work in a plant? Or another auto plant?

Sharn: No. They got married at a younger age and are homemakers.

PP: Let's hear a little bit now about your job. When you were very, very young, say ^{at} high school, did you work up north?

Sharn: I worked on the farm.

PP: Then what happened? What was your work?

Sharn: I worked for different uncles that I have.

PP: On farms, you mean?

Sharn: Yeah. The main source of income I had was working for one uncle that had a cherry orchard. Earned enough money to buy my own things. Bought my own car and took off.

PP: And then what? You came down here? Did you stay with relatives? Or you had no relatives here.

Sharn: I had an uncle and aunt here at that time. I had a room with them with kitchen priveleges.

PP: Where did they live? In Detroit?

Sharn: Yeah, in Detroit.

PP: Then what? You applied at Gear and Axle or you applied some other place first?

Sharn: When I first started, I started where my aunt was working thirty-one years ago. At ^(Arby) Arby corporation. It's upholsterers, I think. I worked at Arby corporation about two months and then I went to Bud Wheel. I got laid off in fact, at Arby corporation.

PP: How do you spell Arby?

Sharn: I don't even know. It was upholstery factory that was located right near 7 Mile and Mt. Elliot area, on St. Louis Street.

PP: What kind of work did you do?

Sharn: Press operator, cutting upholstery.

PP: What about at Bud Wheel? What did you do there?

Sharn: *Generally Assembly.*
I was operating a spot welder that was machine operated. Press operator. Most of the friends that came down about the time I did, they were working at Gear and Axle. They were working overtime. So, I went and applied there.

PP: About what year was that?

Sharn: In 1950. I started December of 1950, in fact.

PP: Do you remember the exact date?

Sharn: Oh yes.

PP: Everyone knows the exact date.

Sharn: Well, they got it marked right on the clock that I got from Chevrolet. After twenty-five years service.

PP: What was the exact date?

Sharn: December 14th, 1950.

PP: What did you go in as?

Sharn: I volunteered for any kind of work. They started me out as press operator. I believe I was most of the time. Then I went into inspection. Fifteen years later, when I realized there was better money elsewhere,

Sharn: that's when I applied for skilled trades.

PP: How many years were you in production?

Sharn: I would say about fourteen years. Because I've been in skilled trades fifteen or sixteen years.

PP: When you applied for skilled trades, did you have to get into an apprentice program?

Sharn: I was in Employee-In-Training program, they call it. We went to school for just the general basic math courses and drafting.

PP: How long did it take you to get your journeyman's card?

Sharn: We were actually in E.I.T. program for four years. But before you got the journeyman card you had to be in there six years.

PP: Is there a big difference between the way people regard production workers, if you are a production worker, or if you are in the skilled trades?

Sharn: I haven't noticed really any difference. I know they make less money but there's no criticism between the employees. There is a lot of people that wish they could get in. Some of them aren't qualified and there's just not enough openings for everybody to

Sharn: get in.

PP: Were you working at the same plant, ^{at} Gear and Axle, the whole time?

Sharn: As a E.I.T. I was working in the same plant.

PP: What plant?

Sharn: I worked in Plant 1.

PP: When you got your journeyman's card, how old were you?

Sharn: I must have had my journeyman's card about ten years now. About forty years old.

PP: Before you did that, had you ever considered any kind of other job? You mentioned about having a number of years in. I wondered if you ever had considered going into any other line of work, such as going back onto the farm.

Sharn: I never thought about going back to the farm. I tried different jobs while I was working at Chevrolet. ^{I did try.} I went to school for auto mechanics and auto collision work. I tried that part time but you have to be real fast and good at it.

PP: Where did you go to school for that?

Sharn: That was Wolverine School of Trade.

PP: Where is that?

Sharn: That's almost Downtown. That's on West Jefferson (Sound of car driving), right near the old post office downtown. In that area.

PP: Are you still working now?

Sharn: No, I got all I want at Chevrolet.

PP: In other words, you ^{took} ~~picked~~ the thirty and out.

Sharn: I'm still working.

PP: You're still working . . .

Sharn: At Chevrolet and that's it.

PP: Let me ask you this. Have you ever been laid off?

Sharn: Very short periods of time. I was laid off maybe at the most for ^{about} ~~a~~ five weeks during inventory time. That was after the first ^(as ZIT) year I got in skilled trades. Or the second year. They had long change-overs at that time.

PP: So, this would have been in the summer months?

Sharn: Yes, it worked out real good. It was after we moved here and I had a lot of work over here. So, it worked out perfect.

PP: If you'd been laid off or things had been bad jobwise, would you ever have considered re-locating in another state?

Sharn: Not really in another state. I've thought

Sharn: different times to go back up north. But there was not the job opportunities up there. After I got married and established here, I just forgot about moving anywhere else.

PP: Does your wife work now?

Sharn: Just part time as a substitute teacher.

PP: Has she worked quite a number of years?

Sharn: No. She just started back about two or three years ago, at subbing. Before that, it was bringing up the family.

PP: Do you know of any Polish auto workers who have gone to find work in another state? Do you know anyone that is Polish decent that might have left this area, gone to ~~the~~ Southwest or anywhere else for that matter?

Sharn: There's a couple friends of mine that did work at Chevrolet even. One of them ^(Polish) moved to California and started working there. After he got there, he got married and he ended up staying there.

PP: What about the other friends?

Sharn: I haven't even kept track of him. Right now he's back up north. He went to Flint and then he moved back up to the Traverse City area.

PP: But he never went out of state. Actually, how many years of school ~~have~~ you had? Where did you actually graduate from? Did you graduate from high school up in Maple City?

Sharn: Yeah. In Cedar, a little town right near Maple City.

PP: Then you had schooling down here when you were studying to be a cutter/grinder. But, then ~~also you~~ had the trade school work too. Have you any idea how many years of school you've had beyond high school?

Sharn: The trade school for auto mechanic and collision work, that was only one year involved in that. As a cutter/grinder, that was only one year also. That was only two days a week. It was very short classes. Two hours a morning twice a week and there was one session that was three months or four months. And then we went another session that following Fall. So, actually I didn't even spend a whole year in there.

PP: Can you describe your job? What is a cutter/grinder?

Sharn: We sharpen tools for production use.

Sharn: It's a variation of everything. Reamers, drills, mill cutters, placing cutters for (102) cutting.

PP: Do you have to wear special protective clothing?

Sharn: No. The only thing we're required to wear is safety glasses. Everybody in the plant has to wear them. Anybody that works in the plant.

PP: The whole Gear and Axle?

Sharn: Yeah. Prescription, if needed, or otherwise.

PP: What about your hands?

Sharn: Not in our department. There is some departments that wear gloves. But we don't have to in our department.

PP: You mean that everybody wears glasses at Gear and Axle?

Sharn: Everybody wears glasses.

PP: Including the people that do the inspection?

Sharn: Yes. Everybody.

PP: The foreman?

Sharn: Everybody. No one can walk through the plant unless they wear safety glasses.

PP: This includes ^{the} plant superintendent?

Sharn: Everybody.

PP: How did you get your job at Gear and Axle?
You got it just by going? You didn't get
it through a relative?

Sharn: No relative, no help. I went and applied for
it one morning and that afternoon I was
working.

PP: So actually, the ^{present} job you have now in Plant 11,
is that the same job you had when you were
an E.I.T.?

Sharn: I'm in Plant 7, centralized now, as master
mechanic. But it's the same type of work.
Plant 1 and Plant 7 are the only two plants that
have cutter/grinders now.

PP: How many people are cutter/grinders with you,
at Plant 7?

Sharn: On both shifts, I think we have 44 people.

PP: Have you any idea how many people are registered
as cutter/grinders in the Union?

Sharn: At one time we had as high as 130 people.
Increase in throwaway tools and improvement
in different type reamers and automation,
they just slowly eliminated cutter/grinders.
It's fading out. Not as many needed.

PP: This is the first time I've heard of throw-away tools. I've heard of throwaway^{ay} equipment in other fields. For example, hypodermic syringes in medicine and this kind of thing. Are there a lot of throwaway tools?

Sharn: Every year there's more of them.

PP: Is it cheaper to have a throwaway tool than to have a tool that's precision ground and reused again?

Sharn: I guess they are finding out, some of them are not working as well as they figured. But there is a lot of it. Like reamers or mill cutters where they just put inserts in there instead of sharpening the blades. I guess they are finding that it is cheaper to have throwaway tools than to have extra labor.

PP: These throwaway tools, what are the blades made of? Are they still made of metal?

Sharn: They're made of metal. They're made so that they are put in, like in a mill cutter, they're put in slots. The cutting angle, they can use it four different times, that same blade. They turn it over. Then after it's all used up on all four sides, then they just put new ones in.

PP: So, it's like the razor then with razor blades that you put in and just discard. It's not like the old razor that you used to have to sharpen.

Sharn: They're trying it with a lot of stuff now. Even taps and some drills. Mostly it's in the mill cutters and throwaways and tool bits. They use them just one time, and throw it out.

PP: When you were working with the more permanent tools, how often would a tool be used before it had to be worked on by someone?

Sharn: It varies. Depends on normal use. ~~Were they~~
^{Did they} ^{use blades?}
~~then overrun~~ There is some reamer blades that we sharpen as many as eight, ten times before they were finally used up. Then if they were overused or burned, well, we had to cut off more, sharpen more off of it.

PP: But, now you say a reamer blade can be used . . .

Sharn: Not so much a reamer blade itself. There're some reamers that are just used one time, then discarded. Tool cost is very high, as far as I can see. But the labor is high too. So, I guess they're weighing which one outweighs the other.

PP: How has this had a effect on the tool and dye people, as far as jobs are concerned?

Sharn: They have been working good because they're making more tools. ⁸ (End Side 1, Begin Side 2)

PP: How long have they been doing this throwing away of tools?

Sharn: They have been going into it as far back as I can remember, but it's more so each year. I would say in the last six ~~to~~ eight years it's been more evident. As they've been going into...more throwaways, they've been eliminating more cutter/grinders, too.

PP: What happens to these cutter/grinders?

Sharn: Most of them were brought in from production and they went in as E.I.T.s. They go back to their production job. They have enough seniority to hold a job there.

PP: So, in other words, what they do basically is bump somebody.

Sharn: In the long run, yes. Because they go back to their production job and the guy who has less seniority ends up being laid off.

PP: When they do go back to production, that means that their salary goes down, doesn't it?

Sharn: It should, but it seems like they haven't laid off as many salaried people or they give them better chances to stay on their job. I don't know much about salaried personnel.

PP: I should say wages, really. What I mean is, if a person doesn't have much seniority as a cutter/grinder, and his job is eliminated, and he goes back to production, his wages go down.

Sharn: Oh yes. You get paid according to the job. I've been through that myself.

PP: When was that?

Sharn: I was cut back just a couple years ago for five months. I was cut back to my old job as inspector. When was the other slow-down? Back in '74, '75?

PP: And you had how many years seniority at that time?

Sharn: I didn't carry all my seniority into cutter/grinder. When I started as a cutter/grinder as E.I.T., that's when I carried my cutter/grinder seniority. Right now, I think I have fifteen years seniority as a cutter/grinder. In the plant I have thirty-one years now.

PP: So, it was just your cutter/grinder seniority that you estimated what your seniority was, and that's why you went back into production. How was it that you were able to get back to being^a cutter/grinder again?

Sharn: Things picked up a little bit. They have to call according to seniority back into the department. Right now I have only eight people under me in cutter/grinder.

PP: You mean with lower seniority. How much seniority has the lowest person?

Sharn: Lowest seniority has about fifteen years and I have maybe about fifteen and a half years. That's how close. It's not comfortable. I mean I have all those years and have only that few people but I have my thirty years there, so I'm not as concerned as I used to be.

PP: So, in other words, it would be possible then for you to retire because you have your thirty years. And you'll get your full pension. You'd get a full pension even though you only had fifteen years as a cutter/grinder?

Sharn: I carry all my seniority as a GM employee.

PP: So, in other words, if it came to the point that they laid off ten cutter/grinders, which would include you, presumably, because you only have eight below you, right? You could retire on a full pension.

Sharn: I could retire.

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

Sharn: I would like to get a couple of my children through college. At least to see how big of a expense it's going to be. I'm finding out that the one that's in college now is very expensive.

PP: What is she studying?

Sharn: She's going for dental hygienist. She's going into her third year. She's got two more years to go.

PP: And then you have three more children.

Sharn: That's the ones that I feel is more important to have college educations. Although, it's important for everybody to have some kind of profession now. Because, even a girl,

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Sharn: after they get married and have children, they still go back to work because it's necessary the way the home prices are and everything. They almost both have to work to make a go of it. I was fortunate enough that I made enough money, or I had a job all along, that I could do it on my own. I didn't need an extra wage earner.

PP: Do you feel that education is important for young people these days?

Sharn: Well, the ordinary job in a shop is not available. Even the fast food restaurants, a person can't make a living on what they pay there. They almost have to have some kind of skill to get a better paying job.

PP: So ,actually, you plan on retiring when your children are through?

Sharn: I'm hoping in another five or six years. My oldest boy should be pretty well out of school already then.

PP: And then the other two?

Sharn: I hope to be putting away for their education and future now.

PP: Have you any idea what you'll do daily do

PP: when you actually **d**o retire?

Sharn: I never really thought about it. At times, I would like to move out in the country and just have a little bigger open air space around me, with a nice garden. And have a lake nearby where I can do a little fishing. Do a little hunting. Just plain do nothing.

PP: Do you think you might get bored after a while?

Sharn: No, I have enough hobbies to keep me going.

PP: What kind of hobbies do you have?

Sharn: Fishing, hunting. I do all my own work around the home. That keeps me occupied more than I can handle right now. In fact, right now I got about ten things I want to do and I just don't have enough time to do it.

PP: Say, for example, that it did happen that they decided for some reason to lay off ten cutter/grinders, which unfortunately, would include you, because of maybe use of robots, or whatever the reason would be, ^{such as need for} ~~tools~~ ^{less orders for} tools.

Or they ~~simply~~ had less orders for cars, so they didn't need as many people overall,

PP: in the plant. Because you have these expensive college educations coming up, would you ever consider retraining for some other kind of work? Or would you just try and get other kinds of jobs with what you know now?

Sharn: I thought about it. Right now, I don't see no opportunity to retrain. My age is against me and there is no openings where I'm at. I couldn't see where I could retrain for any job. At one time I wish I would have taken up a different trade that was not so closed.

PP: Like what kind of trade?

Sharn: *Even like* at our place, tool grinding and tool maker. Tool grinding is the best. *They* have never laid off anybody at our place. There was always more demand. I don't know if it's really more skilled. I could handle any of those jobs myself.

PP: What is the difference between a tool grinder and a cutter/grinder?

Sharn: Tool grinder makes tools.

See Training

PP: That's what I thought, but I wasn't sure.
How do you think your wife or friends would feel about a person retraining for another job when they've held a certain job for a long time?

Sharn: If there's any improvement or anything to improve your wages, I'm sure everybody would approve of it. I, myself. If I could see a better future, I would be willing to try anything. I could do any of these jobs myself. I've been around all these different skills. But, you've got to go through the training, or whatever is required. They just can't put you there even though you're qualified.

Future Educ

PP: How do you feel about someone taking early retirement? Say someone retiring at 50. Does it surprise you?

Sharn: No, in fact, I wish I could do it myself, already. I am not about to start any other job. If I retire, I don't want to be tied up with another job. There's friends of mine that are retiring. There's a couple people that I know that are retiring this year.

PP: How old are they?

Sharn: They're 50, 52 years old.

PP: Do they have plans?

Sharn: They have like a small business. Like this one friend of mine has rental income. He's going to do a little mechanic work on the side. If I didn't have the big expenses, I probably would tackle a little sideline of mechanic work or something like that. Not as long as I have big expenses coming up. I don't want to tackle anything where I would be tied down.

PP: Do you feel that Affirmative Action has anything to do with job lay-offs or is it strictly based on seniority?

Sharn: It's strictly on seniority. That's Union controlled, they have to go by seniority.

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

Sharn: No, ^{I haven't.} I follow all their activities.

PP: Do you vote?

Sharn: I vote. Sometimes I didn't vote even, because I didn't care which one got in the office. I didn't vote then.

PP: Have you ever attended any of the education

PP: classes at the Union Local?

Sharn: Oh yes.

PP: Which ones?

Sharn: Just recently I attended retirement classes they had and CPR classes.

PP: Tell me about the retirement classes. Do you feel that they were worthwhile? Did you learn a lot?

Sharn: They made a person more aware of what he's getting into. I understand they're going to offer it again this Fall.

PP: What kind of things did you feel were valuable in the retirement one? What did you learn?

Sharn: The basic things you can expect when you retire. They warn you about all the time you have on your hands. They have the representative from Social Security explain the different benefits you have. They also had a benefit rep from our Local telling us what benefits we got. What we got coming to us when we retire. Mainly, they were trying to tell us to be prepared for all this time on your hands when you get out. But I wasn't too concerned about that because I know I

Sharn: would be occupied. But I'm not quite ready yet to get out of there, either.

PP: How many hours overtime do you do?

Sharn: Right now we're working ten hours, mostly sixteen.

PP: So, if you have ten hours overtime, you've got time and a half?

Sharn: Yeah. Anything over eight hours is time and a half.

PP: If you knew a few years ago what you know now about economic conditions, the cost of everything, would you ^{have} possibly tried a different kind of work?

Sharn: I would have stayed at General Motors because of the benefits and because of ~~the~~ all the time I have in there. I think I would have done the same thing. But I wish I would have gone into ^{like I said} tool grinder. Or tool making ~~or a~~ trade that has better opportunities and more secure. The cutter/grinder field is very insecure right now. There's very few job openings on the outside. ~~say,~~ Even when I retire, ~~if~~ I wanted to do a part time job, there's no openings.

PP: You do have a certain amount of insecurity because you only have eight people below you. But on the other hand, you do have your thirty years. I wonder how the people who are the last two or three on that list, who perhaps don't have their thirty years in, have you heard them talking about how they feel?

Sharn: They feel depressed even, at times. They worry about going back to production and getting a lower pay job. Most of them have twenty years, twenty-two years there. And they want to finish their time out as ~~the~~ skilled trades. Because there's quite a bit of money involved, and it would mean more in a retirement when you're in skilled trades.

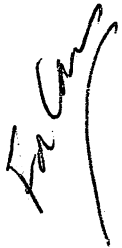
Alena

PP: How do you feel about Japanese and other foreign cars?

Sharn: I never really thought about it. I never ¹⁰⁰ owned a foreign-made car. I don't see that people that work for General Motors should go out and buy a foreign-made car. They should support their own company. That's the way I feel about it. But there's people

For laws

Sharn: that, they're looking for the best buy.

 If they can get a better buy, I guess that's why they buy the foreign-made cars. I, myself, don't feel that I would want to buy one.

PP: What about if the cars were assembled in the U.S., and yet they're foreign parts. Today, for example, just when I was coming over here, I hear there's some kind of arrangement going on between GM and Toyota. I'm not sure yet what it's going to be. But, say it was a Toyota car that was assembled here, under a GM label, but it was really a Toyota car. How would you feel about that?

Sharn: As long as there's American employees building it, I don't see nothing wrong with it. As long as it's our people making it so we don't have to support other countries when there's so many other people out of work here.

PP: What kind of car do you drive?

Sharn: I have two Chevrolets and one Chrysler product. The Chrysler product I bought used. It was just the spur of the moment and I'm very pleased with it.

PP: What year are your cars?

Sharn: '71 Chevrolet and '72 Dodge and then a '79 Chevette. Two of them are about ready to retire though.

PP: Except you know how to fix them.

Sharn: Well, I've been making them go. They got over 100,000 miles on them and I hope to work on the second 100,000 yet.

PP: So, you aren't really in a situation where you would ^{really} get permanently laid off. Because if you get laid off, you have other things that you can do. Would you ever consider taking any more courses, at all, of any kind for interest sake? Not necessarily for job reasons but just some subject that interests you.

Sharn: No, not any more. I'm over that interest right now.

PP: Have you ever wondered about whether or not people should be trained to do more than one kind of job?

Sharn: I think it's very important now.

PP: For example, young persons. Would you maybe talk about that? Have you ^{maybe} suggested that to any of your children?

Sharn: My daughter, she's talked about it herself ^{ed}
 even. How if she had so much more education,
 she could always have something ^{pl} to fall
 on. Strictly right now, it's for dental
 hygienists but she was thinking already
 going on further to get a Masters degree
 or even going for ^a dentist. But, I'm not
 telling her anything as far as ^{about what} her plans are.
 My opinion, a boy should have two fields,
 though to back him up. If one ^{profession goes slower if one} line of work
 would go down, they would have something to
 back them up.

PP: Did you ever feel that when you were
 younger?

Sharn: No. If I would have known better when I
 was in the teens, I don't know if I would
 have done any different. At that time,
 I didn't accept no responsibility, never
 thought about the future. I was from day to
 day then.

PP: I wanted to ask you how you felt about the
 Quality of Work Life circles in the plant
 now.

QWL Sharn: I think it's a very good program. They got

Sharn: the people working together more so than they have before. It seems like, even in our department, people stick together more. And volunteer to do work that before they didn't even think about doing. Mainly, I think it's just where the people are together and discuss the jobs. It seems that it works real good in our department. It seems like it's working good in production too. Where, if they have any problems, they discuss it and it's ironed out better. It has a better way of solving their problem.

PP: Do you think long range it's going to bring improvement in to the plant?

Sharn: I think it brought better relationships amongst the people right now.

PP: What's your thought, for the moment, as we finish, about how you view a man's life in relation to his work? How important do you think a good steady job is to a man?

Sharn: I think that's the most important thing right now. His standard of living. If a person doesn't have a job, their whole life

Imp of job to man

QWL

Sharn: is depressing. I don't know how to describe it. Anyway, I've heard of cases where people almost commit suicide because they cannot have a job to their satisfaction. I have never been that concerned about it. I've always known I had a job, although I was worried at times when I was cut back, and getting ^a the smaller paychecks^t, if I would ever get the bigger paychecks again. It was depressing at that time even.

Imp to job to man

PP: Do you think your feeling about work has anything to do with your Polish background? One hears about the very strong feelings regarding work in Polish families.

Sharn: No, I never even thought about the background as far as my relationship. But I know, most of the guys, we just kid each other, oh we got one of each group in here, and that's about the extent of it. We kid each other: There's a Polack, there's a Dago.

PP: How do you feel about the future of the auto industry in regards to the working man? There's robots coming in, computers, new technological changes. Do you think

PP: there're going to be lots and lots of changes as far as the number of people working in the plant?

Sharn: I can see it already where there's a lot less people working. I, myself, think the people that are working are very fortunate to be in a shop. Because they have the good benefits and good wages where the other people that are looking for work or only got part time jobs or working in these gas stations or fast food restaurants, where they don't hardly get enough to support their family. I think a person in the shop is very fortunate. I know I feel fortunate I got that kind of job. It isn't like when I first started there, almost anybody wanted a job, they could have gone and applied and they could have got a job almost the same day, like I did. It's different now. If you hear of a job, you hear about a thousand people right away lining up.

PP: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Sharnowski.

End of Interview.