

ED AUBUCHON

Q Ed, why don't you tell me about how long you been at the truck plant?

A Just ten years.

Q What was it like the first day you hired in there?

A Well, I remember, I remember coming to the plant, or coming in the plant and my attitude was a lot different then.

Q What do you mean?

A Ah, well I came from a carpet cleaning, you know I cleaned carpet and I was young, I got married young.

Q How old were you?

A I was seventeen.

Q When you got married?

A Yea. So ah, quit school to work. And ah, so I became cleaning carpets as I was really ambitious. It was commission pay, where when you got done and you were done... The faster you worked, the faster you worked, the more you got paid. So it was kinda, it was kinda like ah, a self-motivating job. So you know, I was always a hard worker. And then, when I came to the plant, I remember coming on the line and uh, so when I came to the plant I was real, like I was a fast worker you know. 'Cause I was used to getting paid, not by the hour, but how fast I worked. And I had always been a you know, want to do a good job, and so when I came to the plant, that's the attitude I had, and I was real, you know, filled with excitement. And ah...

Q Excited about what?

A Getting a job at the auto company. It was like... When I was growing up, a lot of people had ambitions to be certain things, but ah, that

was like it for me, that's what I wanted to do.

Q You wanted to be...

A I thought being a... Well, I came from a background where my dad had a lot of different jobs, and so ah, I kinda saw working at the auto company as having you know retirement and you know a place where it was steady income. 'Cause also, the carpet cleaning wasn't like a real steady income because of working you know, it was certain times when it was slow. So I really thought, that's what I want to me, was an auto worker.

Q You were already married? You were seventeen when you got married.

A Yea. I had been in the music and stuff, I thought maybe I might get into that, but I don't think it that serious, but ah, so when I came to the plant, ah, I remember sitting up and you know, that I remember sitting up in a room and ah, looking down on the line, and just seeing all these guys working. And...

Q Do you think they worked fast or slow when you looked down?

A Ah, I don't remember.

Q I just remember it looked like they were working so slow, then I had to do it.

A I remember when I went down there and started working, it was really... I wasn't sure if I was gonna make it or not. You know getting cut and you know not knowing all the tricks.

Q What did they have you doing?

A When I first came in, I was hooking up the radios and, shoot I can't even remember.

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Q In the trim department?

A Yea, a lot of real small little, skinny little you know, screws, you know, real little stuff. You know it was hard getting used to handling and ah... I got a little bit of a cold. I remember there were some things that I really hard to believe I could do it. Like ah, reaching around... There was some things I couldn't even see you know, sticking my hand way up under the dash with this long screwdriver and you know hooking something up way back here and sticking a screw without being able to see. I mean it took me awhile to get the knack of it. But some of those things impress me like that, and it was pretty impressing some of the ways they put the trucks together and cars, you know, I didn't realize that there was that much to it.

Q Was your first wife impressed with you getting a job at Fords?

A Ah...

Q Was she satisfied, relieved?

A Probably.

Q Do you remember?

A I guess, probably.

Q What do you do now? What kind of work do you do now?

A Now I work on the frames, put in drive shafts and it's bigger, a little bit dirtier over there. Bigger nuts and bolts. It used to be the worst area in the plant, but I kind of like over there alot better now.

Q How come you like it better?

A It's more standing. Whereas in the other department, you always in, getting up, and up and down all day, up and down all day.

Q You mean off the truck?

A Yea, a lot of people like it in the trim department better. They think it's cleaner, but I was... It seemed like I always got dirty over there. Windshields, I was always around sealer. Now I'm just with grease.

Q Tell me about the newsletters, and how you got involved. How did you end up getting involved in the United Truck Plant Newsletter, your cartoons, in the plant. Some of the things that people know you for Eddie.

A Okay.

Q Anything that comes up.

A Once I was in and I was in the trim department, once I learned it. At first, it was a little difficult you know. There was always like that ninety day... making it those ninety days. But once I got accustomed to the job, it was always hard, you know for those first ninety days, but once I got it, I felt pretty secure. The work never bothered me... I moved onto other jobs and things.

Q Did you know a lot of jobs in trim?

A Well, if was just that the work never bothered me. You know, I started after one job, I learned another one, and then started... I built windows which was a very good job. I got out of there, it was a line job, I could work ten hours, a ten hour shift and in five hours I could build up all my windows, and leave and go home 'cause I was

fast. Like I was saying, from what I have done before working on commission, I got where I was fast and I, you know, I really, I could get out early. I had a good job.

Q Did the other guys get upset? Did the company get upset?

A No that was just...

Q How would you do that now if you were doing that job?

A No, that job's not there no more.

Q What happened?

A Well, it has nothing to do with the job itself, but ah, automation you know.

Q How did that...

A Well, it's an automated job now.

Q Do they have a robot...

A I'm not exactly sure 'cause I don't work over there any more, but I know ah, that job is stuck right to the line now. Oh, I think Pollack (?) is over there on line two, he builds up that back window now. Ah, yea, he builds the window, and then, puts it in and they pull the string.

Q Bill Davis, he builds it up.

A I know like the windshield now is automated where they just stick it in. Ah...

Q They can't get a hand on that?

A No, there aren't too many jobs like that any more. But back then, that's how it was done and I'd get out of there real... you know, get out of there early. But then what happened, I would get involved with

other people, like ah, I was start seeing... Back then, ah, that was when either right when the paint walkouts were happening, or right after, and ah, there were a lot of young people on the second shift. There was a lot of young people, and uh, it was, it was hard work, but even worse than that it was the supervision at the time, their attitude with a the company, they were... some of 'em were really mean, and ah, I think the way they treated some people and ah... I mean I could name...

Q You can name them to tell the stories and then I will cut out the names, you don't have to worry about that.

A I remember, when I was...

Q Because the more specific the stories are, the better.

A Well there were quite a few young guys on the line there, ah, there was so many different things that happened. There was an Arab guy they used to call him Camel Jockey and make fun of him, things like that. As a matter of fact, there was a Scottish guy there, you remember Scotty, and ah...

Q This was over in trim?

A Yea. I could understand... Well this other, this Arab guy, he left after a while.

Q He died, he got killed in an auto accident.

A No, that's not the one your thinking of, it's a different one. Well, anyway, this Scottish guy and this Arab guy they used to argue all the time, something that... The Scottish guy, 'cause he was English would talk about how the English were, you know, invaded at the time Arabia

or whatever, and uh, it was like, more like just put downs. And, but I didn't like a lot of people back then that didn't treat him very nice. I felt like I could understand the Arab guy better than I could the Scottish guy. But and there would be people smoking dope and all that stuff. I'd get a little involved at that time and ask this Arab guy questions about you know, what it was like from where he come from. I got interested in people, where they come from, what it was like in Scotland, it was almost like seeing a whole new... It was like the whole world opening up really. There was so many different, there was a guy from Yugoslavia, Romania, and it was real interesting to me to find out... It was seeing all these different countries and things. But ah, I started getting involved with these people and when the foreman would come down or pick on one guy, I started getting where I would get involved in...

Q What would he pick on him about?

A Well, there was a lot of that racism, even with the Scottish guy.

Q Weren't they just making fun of him and being nice and it wasn't any big thing?

A Well, at the time... I'm trying to think. At the time, I suppose some of it was joking, but ah, you know, it got to be like an everyday thing. You know, it was more degrading than it was funny after a while. I mean, I noticed it. A lot of people might not of noticed it, but I didn't like it, and I wasn't the type of person to do that and ah, you know I could see it, so I started getting a little involved there, as well as other incidences that weren't related to

racism or things like that. As a matter of fact, I'm not even sure it was, I wasn't involved in enough to really realize what racism was. I just knew the guy, you know, they were really treating some of these people not to nice. The foreman would come down and get on that too, call them Camel Jockey, give 'em a hard time, or the Scottish guy, or the black guy, you know, it was just so much of it. But certain guys they didn't let up on, so I started getting a little involved, or might get between the Scottish guy and this Arab guy. It's hard to get the...

Q I'm getting the picture. You'd be surprised how it all comes together.

A Yea, it's hard because of it's all spaced out.

Q What was it when you said the foreman was sort of mean and not too nice, or rotten, how did the foreman act? I remember you did a cartoon of Smitty onetime, what was that about?

A Okay...

Q Don't worry, I'm not going to use names. What happened, how did you end up getting involved in the newsletter, what was the newsletter? If you were telling someone who was interested what the newsletter is, what would you tell them?

A Well, I started doing these things and ah, I got to pretty good friends with this Scottish guy, as well as a couple of the Arab guys in there at work you know? And he'd be talking about the union, in the meantime, I'm getting in between him and this other guy. The reason I mentioned that is 'cause later on they ended up living



together, they hated each other's guts, it was kind of... It was kind of, ah, you know 'em a little bit. But it ended up, later on, that they lived together and it was really kind of comical. He kind of saw some of the stuff he was doing, but ah, okay so ah... I'm on night shift doing windows, I've been doing that for a couple years and ah I had a pretty good job. I never had problems. There was one foreman there in particular name Dan Smith, but ah, they were all, they were all, none of 'em really, they... all of 'em were under pressure. You know, pressure, from... Well, Dan Smith gave pressure, but I'm sure he must've had some too, but he was a particularly, at the time, a particularly rotten foreman, general foreman. So ah, I ended up building windows, and he was pretty good to me, I'd go home and do all my stuff, but he started having a thing against this Scottish guy alot, and alot that was going on. So me and this Scottish, he talked me into going to a couple, this Tom Wesley, remember him? I went over to his house and got a... he kept telling me we ought to go to one of these union meetings and all that. So I said yea, we ought to that. So I went with 'em, and I got... It was kind of, a little inspiring. When I started realizing there was a lot of bullshit, a lot of bullshit from these committee men. So, after going to a couple meetings like that, Dick Wilkins became my committee man. And I thought he was kind of strange, coming around there.

Q What do you mean?

A Well, he came down on the line, he had these patches all his pants, and you know, peace and long hair, just a real hippie-like kind of

guy. So the first day I seen him, he come down there on the line. And right away, I'm already used to the committee men being kind of jive, and ah, you know just yelling and making a lot of noise, but not doing nothing. So the first thing he come on the line... I forget exactly how it went, but I went up to 'em and I said ah you ain't no good, you ought to do this and do that, and when was the last time you tended line and he jumped right back on me. So then I thought that was kind of cool. So I tested 'em, started... we were having some problems with this foreman, so I decided... I think Joe Mica was one of the committee men that was not doing his job. So I took a petition up, that we have a shift meeting over this. So we got a bunch of people to sign it and we went down, and had a meeting, and Dick was there, so then when we got back, I found out I could do that with a committee man, so we did that. There was a guy down there, Al Lock, and his daughter had a brain tumor.

Q He works with me?

A Yea well back then his daughter had a brain tumor, and I forget what he did. He got a restriction or something, but he was kind of messed up 'cause of worrying about his daughter at the time. And, I guess they got mad 'cause he got a, had a restriction. So he was sweeping the floor, now he's got restrictions so he has to sweep floor. So now, I was working on line four... I was working on line four and I remember he was sweeping the floor, and he had this stuff kind of picked up on a cardboard, getting ready to throw it away, and a foreman came over and grabbed the cardboard, threw it back down again

and told him to get down and clean it up.

Q Why did the foreman do that?

A Because he was mad at 'em, because he got restrictions. Just no... So I got mad and, that wasn't Smitty, Smitty was a general foreman, but I ended up getting the whole line to stay home the next day... or half the line to stay home the next day. But I didn't even work over there. But Smitty got on me for that. Which I didn't mind letting him know. I was pretty forward then, I...

Q Were you pretty proud of what you did?

A Yea. A lot of times people would come over and say, say oh yea they'll be quiet, but this guy's gonna go tell, and I would just say well so what? Let 'em tell, they already know what I do, you know. But there would always be some guy wispering in my ear, watch out. But it never really, it didn't bother me a bit for them to know what I was doing.

Q Did you think you would lose your job?

A At first, I thought I might have some trouble. But after a while what I did, I learned all the rules. Like see there the union has their rules, you know their contract. And I found out back then, at least I felt this way, the company had rules too. You know, you don't do this and do that. So what I did, I learned the company rules real good. Like... Being by learning all those rules I found out they couldn't do too much to me, as long as I went by the rules. Like one day, Smitty got to where he got... I guess if I'm gonna do this in sequence...

Q It doesn't have to be in sequence, tell me what you remember, and we'll put it in sequence.

A Okay. I got to where they were watching me all the time, because of you know after having the so many shift meetings.

Q Would people come to these shift meetings?

A Yea. We had 'em. That's what I liked about the ( ), he got the... we'd meet at and I told him hey some of these people were tired of this or that and so he'd say let's go down to the Red Apple. So I'd go around and tell everybody we were going.

Q Red Apple is a restaurant?

A Yea. Heck we'd get the whole line down there, most everybody. I mean, I was kind of surprised. So ah, but I remember I... This girl that was discriminated against. See that's why I'm not...

Q This was?

A This was way before that suit came around.

Q Okay.

A Well.

Q I'll just end up picking two or three of the stories that come out the clearest. So you just tell 'em and at a point, they'll become clear what you're trying to say. I understand, I'll ask questions if I don't understand.

A Okay.

Q Another incident of how people got together, is this about a woman you were just referring to?

A Yea, it was... Actually that was when I first got, one of the first

things I got involved in. That was when I really, Dick got me into those things. Yea, I remember, I remember I was building those window, I was on line two working for Smitty, and ah, I was building windows. I wasn't getting along with Smitty too good, and I was getting involved with other people's problems. Like this Al Logar (?), whatever, you know, and uh, I was pretty mad. Oh, what happened, this guy on day shifts really messed over bad. You know, I'd get ahead, way ahead, well he wouldn't build nothing, he'd be going home early too. But everyday he'd leave all the work for me. Like cutting, roping, the extra stuff for getting prepared. So ah...

Q Because the person who came on the day shift followed you?

A Yea. Now Smitty wasn't my foreman right then. I had a foreman Phil Brolin(?), Smitty was on the day shift as my foreman. So Phil Brolin told me to ah do it to him. Give him the works you know. So I went, and I tore everything apart so this guy on day shift would, so he would stop screwing me everyday. So I tore everything, but I didn't just do what he did, I did a good job on him. And ah, so the next night, Smitty come over to my, he stayed over just to tell me this, he come over, he said I'm gonna get you. So ah, that was when it started to, that hit. So the first night he come back after that four month thing.

Q Every four months the supervisors change.

A Yea. He come over and I forget how it was said, but I new he was, he hadn't forgotten about that. So I figured well, if he's gone get me, I'm gonna get him. So ah, that was when Vic came over, and I knew

what Smitty was like to harrass women.

Q How did he harrass them?

A Well, he'd tell him if they didn't go with him or something he was gonna fire 'em or you know lots of ways like that. So, what I did, I went all the way through the trim shop. I started on one line, I went down and I found every women in the department. And I went up to them and I ask her about did Smitty ever asked her out or... I went and asked every one. I took a little survey. And then, I found out you know a little bit of what he had done to this girl over...

Q What kind of things had he done? Again, I'm not gonna use names.

A You know asking her out, asking her out and telling her if she didn't go out with him, he was gonna fire her and things like that. Which he ended up doing, or you know discipline her or whatever. I think he fired her. So ah, that's when I did the cartoon.

Q What was the cartoon?

A It was called ah, El Smitso. It was just a cartoon with him, ah, you know, pretty much describing, pointing a finger at her and saying either go out with me or I'm gonna fire you. And when I did that, when that came out, that started my war for a long time.

Q What do you think the things are that the newsletter accomplished over the years. You've been involved in the newsletter from 1972, 1973, to around six years or so?

A Were talking accomplishments.

Q What did it mean to you?

A Well, okay, I'll tell you what it... I'm not so sure what it... I

think maybe it did mean, if it meant this to me, it must of meant it to other people in the plant, 'cause we, it was an interesting experience for me. And I'm not so sure I'd, I'd really be interested in getting involved again. Not so much, but I feel pretty comfortable now. And I don't know if I feel like struggling or doing anything. 'Cause I'm satisfied right now. But ah, back then what it did for me, is don't forget I came out of high school in the tenth grade, got married young, and what the newsletter did for me, ah, as well as my interest in all these other people at the plant in learning about different places, what it did for me, it made even if somebody's experiences might have been bad, it made me, it learned me a whole lot of things. It learned me how to, I mean maybe not even things that there was politics, but when I got upset through the cartoon, or I started writing, it made me learn things I could do that I couldn't do before, that I wasn't no dummy. So it learned me about places, you know.

Q What do you mean?

A Ah, after a while, and it made me learn how the company worked. Ah, because I would do a article or something and I'd go look in my history books that I had in school, that really when I was in school, it didn't mean much to me. And ah, it just made me learn how to write, and do a lot of things like that. And it also gave me a different kind of way of looking at things. Ah...

Q What kind of ways?

A Ah, which... It's change several times over the years.

Q Well get back to that, tell me what you think now. I want to get a sense of what... You haven't said what the newsletter was. What was the newsletter and what did it do?

A What did the newsletter do?

Q What was it? I know what it was, but I want you to put into your words.

A Okay.

Q How was it different from the union?

A Oh, okay. At the time the way I felt about it, when I did go to some of these meetins, like at Tom Wesley's or whatever it was, or at the time even, I don't know there must of been something in me that drew me to a more radical viewpoint. I seen some guys here that were with the rank and file and they talked about young, and we got to have a change. And I think the word change hit me 'cause at first I think I even went out and bought a jacket for the rank and file, it sounded so good. The rank and file, and I even asked a guy, I said what does rank and file mean? That means the people you know, rank and file. I think that guy would of liked it if he, you know, knew I was interested in joining that particular group, but you know, when they explained that word to me, it sounded pretty neat. Changing, because at the time, the union, what it meant to me, it was like there was a bunch of guys and they really didn't care about the people, and at the time, I was getting more involved with these people that had problems, and ah, it didn't seem like they.... It seemed like these union guys all they were concerned about was ah like being movie stars or their



own personal gain. You know, to be important and be on a easier job or something, and all the things maybe what I thought, they were suppose to mean, it just didn't seem like that's what it meant to them. So later, when I did get involved with the newsletter, it was like most of the people, that my close friends in the newsletter, it seemed like they were less interested in getting elected. But I was drawn more to the guys like you and Jerry that really interested that much. And the newsletter at the time, we would support people in other caucuses, but we didn't run a slate, we just let people know information. And at our meetings, it was like, maybe at the time there was people influenced in the way things were going. And later on, I realized that too. But ah, at the time, the way it was run, it was like everybody could say something, what they wanted to say, and there wasn't somebody cutting them off like at a union meeting. The real fast when I did start going to union meetings, real fast did I notice how anytime anybody asked a questions, I noticed the guy had some kind of procedure or something to shut the guy up, and/or some kind of trick or the meeting was over let's take up for 'em. And that was it. So through the newsletter, I found out we could manipulate, we started getting so good at it, after a while, we could manipulate them, and we good start...

Q At the union meeting?

A Right. We got real good at it, we started learning what they knew, and we got to learn the procedure, and we started getting them, there were some things they didn't even know. We could turn things around

on them a little bit.

Q What would you discuss at a newsletter meeting? Did the newsletter get much response, did the union like it, did the company like? How did you distribute it?

A Well it was something to ah... see like I said, people would say watch out somebody's watching you. You know there would be people on the line, what out, this guy's gonna go tell the foreman, he gonna's tell this guy. I was already used to guys watching me all the time. So ah, but it was really something to go up to the front of the plant, and pass out this newsletter, even though the union could pass out anything they wanted up there, when we would go up there, we'd always have labor... At that time, labor relations to me was a little bit more important, they wanted us to meet today. I mean, it was a big deal to me.

Q Say what you mean.

A Well, they would, you know, it was like, to me at the time it was like the big authority you know. And I mean it was like your job, you know, they would come out and say, you can't pass out that newsletter here. You gotta cut it out right now, and I would way wow you know. But then pretty soon it was kind of neat, I would just say, well I'll pass it out anyway. Just watch a few people leave and there would be a few of us still standing there. And it got to be where we turned that around on them just like we did at the union meetings. We started using their rules, and we found out as long as the other slates could pass their's out, we found out we could pass our's out.

They would have to make us all quit passing stuff out. So ah, once we found that out we... Through ah, going through the national regulations board and things like that, getting smarter. We found out we could do those things, but it was a big deal, it was pretty radical in the...

Q Why do you think it was radical?

A I didn't understand why it was radical. Well, at first, we wrote about problems in the plant.

Q What kind of problems?

A Well, like the paint walkouts. I mean that was kind of when I first got involved.

Q That was done over overspray and health conditions?

A Yea, health conditions. Just at first it was like one of those things in the plant, but it was more like we were willing to... I mean it was probably easier for us to write these things that it was for the union to do something. At the time, but we didn't see it that way. But we would write down, ah, we had a walkout due to this... you know I can't remember exactly what, but you know, I don't know why it was so radical at the time, but people...

Q Did people call you Communists?

A Oh yea. That started coming later. I really didn't understand what it meant at first. I even, well, I had to ask you one time, what does that word Communist mean? I really... Then I got so curious, I mean you even, you were gonna talk to me a few times, and I even wasn't really sure, but I said I want to find out what it means, 'cause if

this is you know...

Q You weren't afraid by this being called that, that didn't bother you?

A Well, I wasn't sure what you or Jerry or anybody else was for quite awhile, and ah, then one day, I asked you to explain that to me, and I really didn't know where I was going with it, I just... I never understood it, so I wanted to know. But ah, later on...

Q Did you think you were doing an un-American thing?

A No.

Q By putting out the newsletter?

A No. I never could under... I felt like I was... Well, I don't know if I felt ahead of my time right away. But later on, I began to feel more like it was being a heavier time. There was a point were I did feel communist, you know, all that. I mean people called me it for so long, I started... I started feeling that way.

Q What did that mean when you started feeling that way?

A Well, I mean eventually I realized what I was doing was... I didn't mean the same to me, what it meant to other people, but I understood it a little bit more.

Q What were you doing, or think you were doing?

A Well, I don't know if maybe at first I enjoyed, I enjoyed the conflict with the... I mean maybe I got to enjoy... I mean after a while, let's put it this way, the company was really, some of those people were really mean and rotten, and I felt like I was fighting just some mean rotten people you know. After a while when I learned the rules, I mean I got... there was some guys in there, they would stand there

and watch all day, I mean if you...

Q What do you mean?

A Well, if you caused trouble, which I ended up doing, 'cause I would get around and talk to everybody, I mean I had foreman call me the line diplomat. And... 'Cause I had now, by this time, doing those windows, I started getting where I had a lot of time left, go around help some people out, and I'd go around talking to 'em, I mean you know, all the time, and I got to where I could maybe stir things up a little bit. And, if I didn't like the way somebody was treating somebody, I had my way of stirring a little trouble up, and I think they'd be watching me. Oh, like for example with Smitty, one time... I guess the best to describe this would be to end up, doing that cartoon, later on I did another one on Smitty, but I remember Smitty really hated my guts. And, really between me and him there was really never ah, I think most of it was because of other people why I ended up getting this thing between me and Smitty. I remember he hated... He got in a lot of trouble over that. So ah, he really hated me. I mean, one guy one day said why is he watching you. Smitty's over there standing there watching you through the racks, and he's just staring at you, you know. And I knew he hated my guts. So ah, he got busted back to foreman again from general foreman. So I would go over on that line and I stirred a couple of things up over there 'cause he was still the same old guy, you know. And ah, I got to play a little game with him, and I really enjoyed it.

Q What was that?

A Well, I told you I learned all the company rules, and the union rules now. So I put it together and he didn't like me coming over to his line. So, if I was on his line no matter where I was, he'd come up to me and say you're interfering with production, I'm gonna have to ask you to leave. And if I didn't leave, I knew he would write me up for it. So I got an interesting game going with him. I would go to one end of the line, way down at the other end from he was, and he would walk all the way down to that end of the line to kick me off of his line, to come down there...

Q This is about twenty or thirty yards?

A Hell, probably more than that. However long that line is. But he would come all the way down there to tell me, you're gonna have to leave my area, you're interfering with production. But I got pretty smart, he'd walk all the way down there and just as he got to me, I would leave, and I would go down to the other end. So, pretty soon, I mean this went on for several weeks, I had him walking up and down the line like a yo-yo. But it got so good to where I really enjoyed this, I got so good, I'd get to where as soon as he came up, I'd start walking and he'd right on the back of my neck, breathing down my neck following me, and then, I would just stop real sudden. And then, I'd start going like hey boy the fly isn't around. He just so mad, it was like those company rules, I found out how to use their rules too. And ah, I got to enjoy it. And I also, I got to enjoy with foremans, and ah, maybe I was a smartass or something, but I got to where... a lot of these foreman, they couldn't understand me. Just like I'm sure

they didn't understand you. But it got to where I started talking and I was learning more from my newsletter, and ah, I start, maybe not as a smartass, but I got to where some of 'em were actually scared of me, to talk to me, they would start their talking and it got turned back on 'em. One time I hit a foreman and almost cried over that. It wasn't really that funny. But he had a little bit of a stuttering problem, I really seriously did, I told him I had a uncle that stuttered and I... he started yelling at me, and I said look, I said I think you should slow down, you know, and talk real slow. I said I have a uncle that stutters a lot. I said the way he held it was he talked real slow like this. And as soon as he stopped talking fast, he stopped stuttering. And the guy, buh, buh, buh, buh, buh, I mean he just got really upset and uh, eyes started watering, so then he laid back on me with... 'cause I was going through a divorce, he laid back on me, ah, well you're getting a divorce and you ain't no good, but you know something, he was only a few months after that, he stopped stuttering. Honest to God.

Q Why did the newsletter end, and when did it end?

A Ah, well there were a couple of periods in there, ah, like I remember there was some discussion... we had started writing about things outside the plant too. See there were two guys, well, maybe three that were more political than that one time I had known.

Q You can name anybody, I'm not going to use names?

A Well that was involved in sixties or you know the radical stuff that comes to the plant, and ah, there was a little bit of disagreement

with them.

Q Your talking about me and Jerry?

A Yea. Well not just you even, Vic and ah, like there was some disagreement there and we started talking a little bit about outside things, we'd throw some things in, maybe at that time, talking about South Africa, that was... I'm not even sure this was the time you were there, but we did start discussing some things that weren't really related to the plant, but they... So for some of the regular guys that really weren't that deep in politics, it was a little hard for them to start talking about things that really didn't involve the plant. I mean even talk about a coal miner that was part of the union, that might even of been a little to... seem like it was radical to them. We had started talking about some other things outside the plant, ah, and then, I think you and Jerry at that time, there was some other guys running for union offices too, and ah, it was more important for them, it had become clear to us that it was more important to them, their loyalty was to these caucuses and their own personal gain, it was more important for that than it was to be involved, or you know... they wanted it both ways. They want to belong to that and do this and have everybody support just there caucus, their one particular caucus. At the time, there was disagreement over that... Well the newsletter shouldn't, that's the way I'd see it, maybe I'm wrong.

Q I'm not doing a history as such, I'm doing your story, and I'll pick stories from different parts. We're talking a lot on this because I



don't have anything on the newsletter for the book, and then, we're going to talk about other things which will be much easier. So there was disagreements between two of the folks...

A Yea, because there was some outside politics there. They both belonged to organizations. I'm not even sure when I learned about. You know I knew about your position and Jerry's, but I'm not sure when exactly it was when I learned this stuff. I knew some things, but ah, I knew some things.

Q Well Vic, myself, and Joe, we stopped working with the newsletter in like 74.

A Yea. Well, you had ideologies that were a little bit different from each other, probably a lot, I know you had been together at one time. I just happened to learn some things about you, so ah, I think there was some need for you to put some of that input from your group into the newsletter, and maybe for the newsletter to become more political, in that way. Ah, I think it was hard for the newsletter to go, it was hard for the newsletter to go into that. Hard for the people 'cause, actually I'm glad it was too. Because ah, at the time there was that... everybody started being called communist and things because of your's or Jerry's ideals. And at the time, to me, what the newsletter meant, even... I might even had tendancies, at the time of was kind of exploring you and I was exploring Jerry. But at the time, to me, it seemed like ah, the newsletter was a tool for anybody, I don't how they felt you know, if you were there and you belonged to an organization, you could express your views there. If Jerry was there,

and he was... that was alright. As long as it went around and everybody discussed it, but to become anyone in particular's political ideologies, at that time I'd never seen the newsletter as becoming anything but what it was. Ah, but I think maybe you or Jerry or whatever wanted it to be. I don't think... I think Jerry did too, but at that time, it didn't come out that way to me, the feeling of that didn't. I didn't know if Jerry quite... I knew about Jerry's involvement, but I didn't feel like he was doing that, but I felt like maybe you were doing it at the time.

Q Well I was. I openly said it, I don't think I hid it. I don't think I did anyway.

A Yea, I think Jerry... I mean Jerry would of always like to of done that, but I...

Q He had different views.

A At that time, I felt like, I like the newsletter... I like what the newsletter had done, and I liked it, and ah, I liked being able to not cut off people who belonged to it, and I felt that would cut 'em off.

Q So why does it not exist in 1986, 87?

A Why doesn't it exist? Ah, well...

Q Why did you get out of the newsletter?

A That's something to think about there. I never really did think about it. I think what happened though, the ah, we had the concessions come up and...

Q What year was this?

A Shoot, I don't even know.

Q 1981?

A There was a lot of... I mean things going on from the newsletter and between that time and the time that Debbie exists no more. Ah, there was lot of... to me fun things, like I got more invovled and started to going to demonstrations.

Q What kind of demonstrations?

A Oh, I went to the... First we started going to I think maybe Jerry pulled me in with this group in his own way, but that was fine 'cause everybody in the newsletter wasn't doing that. But it became to where more and more were. But I went to ah, trying to remember my first one. Ah heck, one time I went just down to Indiana to an Essex Water strike that we took up a collection for. But...

Q They workers who were on strike from Essex Water?

A Yea. We went down to march in the picket line. I started marching, I remembered Chrysler workers they had a heat walkout and I went down there. You know, it was kind of neat to me.

Q Did you think you would make a big change in the auto industry, in the union?

A I think maybe I saw where... I don't know, the times were kind of funny, I think at one point I did, when Reagan got... Right when Reagan got elected they had that all people's congress then and I went to that. And I wasn't sure what was gonna happen, but I really thought that things were gonna be different after that or more radical with people all over 'cause there was so many in the country that I felt like people were really hurting what he was gonna do. And ah,

after Watergate, you know all that stuff going on, I really felt like... Well, I went to a demonstration too, that march on the Pentagon or whatever and that was first real big demonstration I went to. And I guess I was kind of impressed you know all the people's congress. And I, I was a little inspired there, I thought maybe... I wasn't so sure of where we was going and I was of everything falling apart, kind of, so to speak. 'Cause really, to tell you the truth, while I was got involved in the politic part, I wasn't so sure I wanted any of these people, you or Jerry, I wasn't so sure I was ready to live like that, even though I started learning all those things, and you know for even a while I believed it was nice for people to share and everybody live alike all that. By this time, I wasn't so sure I really wanted to live at.

Q How did you perceive Jerry and myself living?

A Not how you were living? Oh, there was a difference in how I perceived you guys living as to maybe what your organizations wanted to live like. Like I'll tell truth, back then, I always stuck... I went to couple of your things and... you want me to?

Q Sure!

A I remember I went to Jerry's, okay I'll give you an idea of it. I started going to Jerry's things. Now I'd go up to Jerry's things and I'd start feeling real, you know I told you I didn't have that education, I started not feeling smart or nothing, but I started feeling not so stupid, like hey, I can do some of these things; I can write, you know I started really learning things I never learned in

school. I started studying a little bit of my English book, how to write; and history, looking up this up, learning what's going on in this country or that country. It was really neat, but I started realizing when I was going down to Jerry's office, every... I mean if you blew your nose the right, someone would say, boy you're doing a fine job, that's the best nose blower I've ever seen anybody done. And after a while, I got kind of where... I started seeing these other people coming in. And I noticed they were doing that to them, and them, and pretty soon, I got sick of that. You know, it was like, it was lie. Don't tell me, you know what I mean, it was sucking me in. I don't need that, I started realizing there was something to that, and ah, you know like patting people on the back and I mean if they could of drawn a straight line they... or whatever they did, they gave him...

Q So you started having a mixed reaction. On one hand it was very helpful, and did help you get some things together, started using things. On the other hand, all that support seemed a little too much, it didn't seem honest enough?

A Well, I was enjoying the work at the newsletter for awhile there. And, like when I got invovled, they weren't as fussy as I was, like Jerry and Fred Miller, you know what Jerry's like, he's a slob. And I'd get in a lot of arguments with 'em over... He'd say well we don't got the time to fuss with this, and I'd say Jerry, I'm not gonna print this, I don't want to print this 'cause it ain't right. So I started putting this in this order. If were gonna do this, we're gonna do it

right or don't even bother doing it. You know, I started not even gonna get involved in this, if this is the kind of sloppy work you do. I said this ain't the way I'm wording this stuff, don't even bother putting that down if you got to change the words and do this and that, I want a good thing here. We really want these people to enjoy reading this. So, you know, that other part, I knew there was a certain getting sucked into this group. You know, in other words, they were sucking people up into this group. I learned alot from it, that's what I said earlier, I learned alot, and at the same time, it was that manipulation there. And then, at the same time, I went to one of your meetings, and I remember Rosa Tubar(?) was there.

Q Who?

A Rosa Tubor(?). And we were all sitting around in a circle, and I said oh boy this is another newsletter meeting, and everybody's gonna talk and it's all turnaround. And it was one of those study groups, just for fun or whatever, but I sat down and everybody started talking. But by this time, I had been so fed up with some of the shit they were doing to me... Some the stuff the way Jerry's stuff did in sucking me in. I realized there was a certain sucking in to this stuff. So, when I sat down with Rosa Tubor(?), and all this stuff was going in a circle, I realized... I was smarted enough at this time, to realize that she wasn't as interested in my, my questions as she was as she was trying to get me to answer 'em the way she wanted me to. I realize that she was trying to make me answer the questions in a certain way. You know, we'd start talking about something, and she

had a manipulative way of making me answer the question the way she wanted, or getting her kind of response.

Q It's just that I called Rosa just recently and she's the same person in the world to think that that's what she was doing, even though we all know that's how it's perceived at various times.

A Well maybe it was me. It might of been...

Q I understand what your saying, it's not important, I'm not here to argue about that.

A Well, what I'm saying is, at the time, that's where my mind was. And I realize in organizations, there's some propaganda there, and if your gonna get people... I mean you know, later on I learned these things, I mean I do. I suppose I was doing it when I was going down the line talking to people. I mean I talked to people and that's a human thing. But at the time, I didn't see it that way. I was looking for this nice kind of thing we had in the newsletter.

Q How come you're not involved now?

A Well...

Q Do you not care about the folks at the plant anymore? Are there no issues in South Africa?

A I really don't.

Q What?

A I don't care about the people at the plant that much any more. Not on a political level. Unless something happens, I you know, I... It's kind of funny, I go and see a movie or a situation... I'll watch type t.v. now or, or... I don't know exactly what I'm trying to say. But

I'll watched a good movie, Platoon, and ah, which I thought it was... Well no movies are particularly, or particularly profound to me, but I get something out of anything I watch now. But one night I was watching Platoon, and ah, some times I worry about my sanity. I ah, I watched Platoon, and I thought it was a kind of a more realistic of what happened in Vietnam. But as I watched the movie, more than to see what was going on there, it made me realize, or you know, I think about these things all the time, but I looked at it, and as I watched these people in this movie Platoon, I could see all the guys in my area. I could kind of fit their personalities into these people and see how easy it was for something like to happen and how ah there would be one rotten guy there, and how easy it is for maybe some people to become rotten too. And ah, you know like they might start kicking some poor guy that maybe doesn't look the same as they do, and ah, I can see how easy it is for that one rotten guy for charisma he has, to make these other guys come up and put their macho or whatever it is, on this one individual or something. That's how I see it in that movie. And at the other times there some guys that don't give a shit, but most of them are on dope. And they feel pretty good there, or there is some guys who ain't on dope there. I could see all of these, you know, like personalities in that. I watched a movie, another movie later, the things I really don't want to watch, but for some reason I'm drawn to seeing these things.

Q What do you mean?

A I got cable now, and they got all these interesting talk shows and things. Sometimes I don't even want to watch the news, I'm just not



interested, but ah, for some reason, I end up watching this stuff. And I watched ah, a thing about the Nazi's, a documentary about the Nazi's during World War II and they were more or less talking to this one guy and he was talking, and ah, the one thing that he said that was, it made me again, think of the plant, he was a Jew, and ah, I always wondered why those six million Jews or whatever, why none of them ever fought back? You know, to have... 'Cause actually, in my mind, when I first went there, some of these foreman and you know, really seemed like some of these Nazi soldiers to me. They're so cruel and mean. And ah, maybe it's the mentality I see, but ah, this guy he said that most of the people were so weak, under-nourished or whatever, that it was just a, not just their bodies, but their minds that it was so easy to march into those ovens. You know, people often wondered how they could just walk into them, and he said it was so easy 'cause their minds and their bodies were so weak, just the thought of fighting back never entered into their minds. And he said, one day a German Soldier S.S. guy looked at him, and he asked him, you know a personal question, were you married or are you married? And the guy said, ah, he said yes, and the German soldier looked down at him and said what would a woman ever see in you? And it was like ah, this man wasn't even a human being. But even then, I can see, I can see where, with people at the plant, I can see how easy it would be for them to be like that. So my answer to my caring about the people at the plant, I care, but I'm not... they all have their personalities, and at this point, I'm... I guess I'm not that

interested in... unless there was a crisis on finger. I'm just not, to me, even though I had learned a lot of things and to be involved in that, it's a lot of sacrificing. At one time, I thought you know this was the thing to do, but I guess through my own personal things, there was pain involved in all this too. I think I'm tired of having people watch me, all day long. And I'm also tired at a lot people that maybe got me into this, somehow or another, they aren't there no more, or...

Q Where did they go?

A Well, there's...

Q Name them all.

A Name them all?

Q Yes.

A Well I know Vic's gotta pretty good job now, which I'm glad for 'em. I think there was a lot of pain for him.

Q What is he doing good?

A Computers.

Q You like working with computers for the company?

A Yea, next door. But I... There was a lot of times he didn't work, or was on medical. I don't say that I don't blame him, 'cause there's a lot of pressure at work when you're a radical or you know, there's a lot of pressure there. Ah Jerry, Jerry's on medical retirement, or whatever, and ah, you know it's , he went through a lot there, and I can't say, I can't say that I don't blame for... there was a lot of pressure for him. But I feel like I'm left there alone...

Q Name some others, Reed is know on salary.

A Reed's on salary.

Q I want to name them because I think it paints a pretty important picture.

A Yea, Reed's on salary.

Q Working computers.

A Yea. There really weren't too many people really involved in the deep stuff. I was surprised how I got ah, as deeply involved as I was, I guess I was one of the top guys and I never realized it until I have this stigma now of being a communist. But easier to deal with now days. I laugh about it. But I still get a stigma of being... See, that one of the reasons why I really don't care about the people. I mean, I've been called, I've been... not just the stuff I went through with the company, but when people just about spit on you at work all day, it really ah...

Q What do you mean, spit on you?

A Well, every day you get this, I guess maybe it's because I'm one of the guys still working, and maybe because there ain't anybody else there, maybe it's like you're the only guy left, and maybe it's a lot easier to pick on you or something, I don't know. But, except I don't mind picked on, except as long as I am, I really don't care to put my neck out. 'Cause all the people that I used to get involved for, ah, turned around and pretty much, don't think too much of me. Whereas, I felt like I, I don't deserve a pat on the back, but ah, some people are pretty cruel to you after maybe some things you done for 'em. I figured maybe I... see like I feel like I could take care of myself.

Q You have fifteen years in the plant now, what kind of changes have you seen. Do you see the union as having changed over these fifteen years? Where do you see the union going in the next fifteen years? How has it changed?

A Weak.

Q Is it weaker than it was before?

A Yea. Except that I'm not surprised because I maybe a few times there, but way back, I might have felt like it was good, but it didn't take long before I realized it was, I mean it, I think from the day I was there, it was getting weaker and weaker. Because it seemed like every time... see I started going to all these ah, little strikes here and there, and after a while, I got tired of going to 'em because no one was winning. I mean ah, when people went back work, they went back with nothing after being out a long time. These you know, just about every one I ever seen go back to work, went back with less than what they went out with.

Q What would you like to see the union do in the next six years? What is important to you in the plant? Has the company changed much in the last ten or fifteen years?

A Yea. Oh, it's a lot nicer. I mean, it might sound funny...

Q No, I hear you. Tell me what do you see that is nicer?

A It's really nice, but I think ah heck I got things, you know, actually when I got involved, there were things that I actually you know... I ran for elections a couple of times, and I would actually think in my brain... One time I ran for president.

Q You ran for president of a local?

A Yea, and I really took that serious. And ah, I think everybody in the newsletter thought that was funny. But that was an independent thing I did. But I didn't take it serious that I was gonna win, but I took it serious to write a good bulletin, and took it serious enough to pass it out, but I also had things on my mind back then what I would envision it would be like. And it's almost like that right now.

Q In what way?

A Well heck, we got air conditioned break rooms all around the plant.

Q Break rooms?

A Well you know, all around the plant.

Q Where you watch t.v. and coffee?

A Yea, we got air conditioned rooms, we got television, heck we even got these televisions on the line now, the areas are a lot cleaner. They took time to put a mat down to walk on for my feet. I think that... well the supervision treats you a lot better, I'm not so sure there ain't something else to do with that, the fact that there stuck with me, not just for four months, but all year long. I think there, they don't want to bother me too much, or anybody else. But the atmosphere is a lot nicer, except that underneath all that, I know there's other plans that the company has.

Q What kind of other plans?

A Well, I know they'd like to get rid of a lot people, you know.

Q What do you mean, just ride him?

A I'm not so sure, I really don't know. I know through attrition maybe,

I think that the union pretty well takes a stand on the firing, which has been the only real good the unions been able to do since I've been there. They've always had stand on trying not for anybody to get fired, at least to get 'em back. Ah, I lost track.

Q You were talking about how the conditions changed; easier, better atmosphere.

A Oh I just know automation's coming.

Q Have you seen a lot of automation in your area, and what does it mean to you?

A Not yet. Just little bits and pieces of it.

Q Do you have an older daughter?

A Yea she's thirteen, that's my step-daughter. You know, I know these things are coming, and ah...

Q Do you think you'll retire or what will happen to you?

A Yea, I guess. I guess maybe what I'd do, is I'd try to... see I'm, I am a, I'm a, see right now, I'm just trying to live. I have a wife, actually, a new family, and I'm trying to... what's important to me now is being comfortable. See my wife would of never, the one I have now, she would never mind, she's been... she's been, she went to some of the places with me to watch, and you know, my ex-wife, maybe she resented me being involved. The wife I have now, would be behind me all the way, no matter what I did. I mean, I could out, and go to all these demonstrations and do all these things, but see I'm comfortable now, and ah, I think maybe I try to fog some of these things out from my self. Sometimes I don't want to think about what's coming down the

road. I want to think that in fifteen years from now, I'm gonna retire, I'm gonna take my boat out there...

Q That's a nice boat. What kind of boat is it?

A It's a Sylvan, but it's you know I try to build up for my retirement. I have, you know, there's a word way up there, all these passings I used to think of are gonna come true.

Q How serious the crisis is and how things are gonna get really bad.

A Yea. And I'm been in bad shape before. And ah, like I was saying, she'd let me do it, if that's what I wanted to do, I'd be able to do it. But ah, this is, I'm trying to plan towards enjoying my life. See, when I first got involved in this stuff, I was... I always criticized you or Jerry or somebody that when you first get involved you... like I really cared about people, but after a while, it gets to where you... I started enjoying the fight more than I...

Q I remember you telling me that.

A And ah, sometimes you forget the reason you got involved in the first place. And well, now... I forgot what I was going to say.

Q Let's go on the home front a little, okay? Then we'll go back to the plant.

A Well oh anyways, anyways, the reason I got in politics 'cause I care about people and things, and I actually thought that by doing that I would better my life. Or you know, I would do it dignity, that I had some self-respect, and I wasn't gonna let these foremans or anybody take that away from me. I would rather be out on the street at the time, then have someone treat like a dog, and I didn't like anybody

else being treated like a dog there. I guess maybe the biggest thing, I never did get into in this thing, was what got me involved is how people trying to take other people's self-respect away... and that's something I never wanted done to me. I'm... the reason I got involved was to better my life. I mean, this is how I want to live, and so, now that I'm, you know I'm rich, but I'm comfortable. I have a certain, main goal in my mind, is just to relax and have a nice retirement. And I would that everybody could do this, and maybe I try to fog this out that ah, all these bad things that happen. But somewhere deep inside, I know that... I know the process of evolution in everything, the auto, the governments, societies, I know there's an evolution to all of that. And I know that things got to change. And I know how easy all these things that the union fought for can be taken away. Reagan's gonna do that. So, I know that if I have... I think that a time people in the plant thought that... I think they're learning that now too. People in these plants thought hey I got this retirement benefit, I got this, and this is the law. And I think they thought that was gonna be forever. And I think they come to... They're beginning to understand how easy someone can take that away from 'em.

Q When you were coming up... Where were you born, where did you go to elementary school, what did your folks do? When were you born?

A I was born...

Q You're are still smoking Lucky Strikes, one of the few people remaining.



A Yea. I was born in Highland. In Highland Park. It was Detroit Receiving or one of those hospitals. But I was from, I grew up out in Monroe, Michigan at Stoney Pointe, on the lake. I lived there until I was about twelve years old, eleven or twelve years old. I know it's kind of funny to say this to some people, but I think I've kind of... I wasn't no farm boy or nothing, but I was out there in the country. I go out into the woods and, but my mom and dad both worked. My dad had two jobs.

Q What kind of jobs?

A My dad had quite a few jobs. He was a taxi cab driver and a bartender all at one time, I guess. At the time I when I was growing up, I didn't know these things. But ah, he was only home on the weekends. 'Cause we lived way out there in and he worked in Detroit. At the time, the expressway wasn't there, it was quite a ride. At the time, I didn't realize that was why he away from me. But he... I guess he had a couple jobs. But he's had a lot of different jobs. He even worked at Fords one time. But that didn't last very long. Then, my mother worked pretty much and my sister watched me. I had a sister and older brother, but my sister watched me, but she was pretty young, twelve. I think eleven or twelve she watched me. So I would run around all day out there you know doing what I wanted to do til five o'clock when my mother got home.

Q What is your ethnic background?

A Well, I know my grandfather, that goes along, I really respected him, but he came from Missouri and ah I guess he had a house out there in

Monroe. That was more like, there were cottages out there, it was right on Lake Erie. And ah, but he lived down in Detroit down on Vernor and Livernois for like fifty years, fifty or more years. But all the neighbors used to go... I guess maybe some of the ways I feel, have a lot to do with my grandfather, because we used to go into there on the holidays and everybody used to go there. My mom and dad both come, I guess in those it would be huge families, but there were seven children or more on each side. But it was like everybody went to my grandfathers, I mean even neighbors and I mean we even had some Gypsies. They would go out and get them, and they would come play, and a lot of people in that neighborhood knew my grandfather. He... You know it was they were... He struggled a lot back in the depression, all those things. I remember one time, stories about selling... going out and catching carp and bringing it in and selling 'em. And stealing coal off the coal cars and things like this. But ah, you know, he was kind old fashioned working class kind of feeling. And ah... I guess that's when I lived out in Monroe, that was a real... I mean we didn't have a bath tub, I had to take a bath in a wash tub.

Q In a wash tub. Did you have indoor plumbing?

A We had indoor plumbing, but the bath tub. I remember when we would come into Detroit we would take a regular bath. It was like a real luxury.

Q Then you got married. Where did you go to high school?

A Yea, then I moved to well... It ain't that important, but I moved up,

my dad had dug tunnels... Worked digging tunnels and all kinds of junk like that and then, my dad moved back in, I was kind of really mad, I didn't like him too much at that time, 'cause he was only home on the weekends so when he was home he was hard. He was a real bastard. It was like it was all discipline on the weekend, but I had a ball during the week. But ah, so he got a job for a construction company... somebody in the family. So we moved up to Clarkston. I lived right next to Pine Knob Ski Lodge. But ah, I really, I didn't want him around. I thought it was going to be all discipline, but that didn't last for real long and we ended up working for construction, we moved down to Detroit. And still was around twelve, twelve years old or something like that. And ah, it kind of frightened me to move to the city, you know, I heard a lot of bad stories, but ah, I liked it. It was real closer. Oh, when I lived out in Monroe, I went to Jefferson Elementary School. Then, I ended up going to, when I did move to Detroit, I went to Cody High. But I lost a lot of it at Cody.

Q I taught at Cody.

A You did?

Q Substitute. I taught at Cody in 1970. I remember it vividly. You were out, you had just gotten out right?

A I think it was 69.

Q You were born in what year?

A 52. But ah, I moved to Detroit and that was a working class, a real working class neighborhood. I liked living there. At first, I was a

little worried, but then I fit right in. And ah...

Q What did you think you would do when you were in high school?? Did you have any dreams, expectations, or hopes?

A Not really.

Q Any heros or T.V. programs?

A Any heros? Well see, I got into music, I played in a band. When I was ( ) I wasn't there very long, I started a band. And like we were really were, you know like we did really good. I stayed with that until I got married.

Q What kind of band?

A Rock n roll. I mean we started playing Beatles music, and I ah, I learned how to play guitar. I always wanted to do it, and ah, so then I picked... I went over to this guys house and he kind of knew how to pick a little bit, so I taught him how to play out the cords. Then we found this kid that played drums and we started doing that and just started playing. We got pretty good. We... Our band played with Bob Segar.

Q Really?

A Yea. Way back when he had heavy music. And ah, we got really tight, we were really good, I mean you know, towards the end there. Well actually we were pretty good before that. We played in Eastland, Westland Shopping Centers. They would like have these rock concerts and this guys father was the manager out there. And ah, there would be like five thousand people. And it was really, really... I guess that was my big thing at the time.

Q Did you think you would be a rock star?

A Well, for a while it did, but I don't really. After a while I got so interested in girls, I... That's what got me in trouble.

Q What happened?

A Well, later on she got pregnant. But I mean...

Q How old were you?

A I think I wasn't even seventeen then. So one day I was... We were starting to be really be good in that band. Like even when we played with even Bod Segar was towards the end there. But when we played with Bob Segar, usually when you go out on stage, ah, and there is a big band like that there, usually people... and you play first, they're booing you to get off the stage, but they didn't do that. Of course we used all of there equipment. But they didn't do that, they liked us. We had gotten really good. And, well... This guy... When even got into during the riots. I went down to the recording studio, we were gonna record and all that. But my girlfriend then, she got pregnant, so I went down and applied for a job. So one morning when I was getting up for school, my sister says, hey, somebody's on the phone for you. So I went out there, answered the phone, and he said Mr. Aubuchon you want a job? I said sure. So instead of going to school, I just went to work. And ah, my dad didn't even know or my dad. He didn't even know I was working til about two or three weeks later.

Q What kind of job were you doing?

A The school called... Just carpets, like the carpet cleaning thing.

And ah, so I did that.

Q How did you tell your parents that your first wife was...

A I didn't. I worked for like... Well the school called after a couple of weeks, they'd ask me what is going on, why are you having problem. My dad was always kind of mean, so, I thought well this is something, but I just said ah, I'm just quitting, nothing's gonna change my mind. 'Cause she hadn't said nothing yet either. So, eventually, she... it came to point where she told her mom, then I told mine. You know, sat 'em down and told 'em. And ah, at the time, I was really into this supporting, you know, like this is my obli... My thing my dad did teach me, was... I begin to wonder if it was the smartest thing to teach me, but he taught me to take on my responsibilities. So I was determined to you know... take on my responsibility. And I did it.

Q What does that mean to take on responsibility?

A Well, to go out and get a job. And I didn't want their help either. I went and got the job, got me an apartment, I didn't... Like my brother even he was... was it twenty-two or twenty-three years old, out of the service and he had to live with them. I didn't want no one taking care of me. I wanted to take care of myself. So I did that.

Q Then you had another two children with your first wife?

A We had them later on. Doubt they was mine. Ideal but my you know being young. My wife had a girlfriend who was having all their babies. So she kind of talked me into that. I did that, I ended up having three.

Q Three children?

A Yea. I really enjoyed it though. I mean I really had gotten in to the family, and I figured ah, when I did come to Fords and everything, I always had this thing in my mind that I was gonna be an example for my son or my children, that, you know what people always say, I want my son to be better than me or... and all that well, my mind wasn't like that. My mind was that I had to set the example. Not so much having a lot of money or anything like that, but that respect. I really don't know where it came from, whether ever it was from friends or something. 'Cause I really, even though my dad was responsible for some other reasons, you know putting some responsibilities on me maybe, ah, I didn't really respect him that much for a lot of things.

Q How many years have you been married for your second marriage?

A Oh it's been... I lived with her for a while, so it's been about ten years, and I've married about three years.

Q And your son is now a year and three months?

A Right.

Q And you have a step-daughter who is how old?

A Thirteen.

Q When you think of your son's future, what do you want for them?

A I thought about them a little bit, ah...

Q How is this family going to be different from your other family?

A Okay, before I used to worry about being that example, ah, I'm not so sure what my son has, even more I had my son, I wasn't really sure that was the wise thing to do. I knew my wife wanted to have a

child. And I kind of wanted to have a son of my own...

Q You were just talking about being divorced, it's more like being a...

A Oh yea with my... Rick I'll tell you truth, that's going to worse a little bit, but...

Q Well, if you don't mind talking about it. It's important to you, and you want to share it, that's fine.

A Okay. I guess it's important 'cause it's society. I don't know what you are getting at in this book, so...

Q I'm getting everybody's life, what's important to them.

A Okay, I guess this is important, 'cause if your going to write about it, and something might... maybe I might teach somebody something, I don't know. When I got divorced... I really put a lot into being married, I was married seven years the first time. There were points where I didn't want to be married, but I really got into... And a matter of... Oh, this is really gonna help you, when I was... This is going back, when I was involved and got into the politics of things, from you, I got a lot about women's liberation. That helped me learn something. But what I did, I mean I read Rosa's stuff, although I didn't agree with that little group, I did absorb alot from your articles. And this is actually kind of important to put into here, I learned about women, and one day I come home to my wife, my ex-wife, and I said you know, I'm going out here and I'm spending some time away from home, and you know, doing something I feel is important, this politic stuff. I said, but you know I'm interested in the woman where I work, you know, having a better place, and them



being liberated. And ah, I'm interested in the blacks or you know, all these different things I was learning about. That's when I say, I did learn something about it. So I told her, I said well I said you you know if I'm gonna go to work and I'm doing all this stuff for women's liberation this and that, which I really felt, then I ought to be home practicing it. So I want to try to be better to you. And that means, if you feel like you want to go someplace, you know, or something like that, I feel you should be equal to me. Just tell me and I'll stay home and watch the kids, and I'll start doing some more work. So what I did, because of the... it finally hit me, this women's liberation stuff, that ah, I started cleaning the house. Helping her clean, which wasn't my nature, but I started cleaning, doing all kinds of things. And ah, I would watch the kids, change the diapers, by this time I had three kids. The first one, I didn't change no diapers for. The second one, this is when this started happening, I... But I started realizing as I was changing these diapers and doing these things, I started realizing that there was a more closeness, that that baby started looking to me. And I started really enjoying taking on these jobs. I mean it learned me something, but the only problem was, this became a real problem. Maybe this was kind of... Could of ended up being the downfall in my first marriage. And I kind of put this in a lot of categories, but I realized I started doing so much, that maybe my wife... she wasn't taking it the way I was, as a good gesture. Maybe she started feeling like she wasn't as important or something or something, I really don't know.

But I really started enjoying, when I started doing more things at home, and all these things. But after a while, it went to hell. And ah, so ah, I think from that, I don't know, I kind of figured something out for myself. What I figured out was at ah, that you can give somebody freedom, but there something else that comes with freedom and it's responsibility. And I kind of always felt after that, like maybe the reason black have trouble today and women, 'cause I kind of look at women's liberation as a movement, and the black civil rights movement as a movement, but I kind of look at 'em all kind of that freedom thing, being free. Maybe their spirit is free or something, I don't know how to put that. But, I look maybe with some of the black problems nowadays, maybe it's ah, that someone said hey, I'm mean they're not completely free, but they have a lot more freedoms and someone says hey you're free. But when these people became free, they went wild some of 'em. Instead of taking that freedom and having responsibility for it, a lot of 'em, I don't even think they understand what people did to get 'em that freedom.

Q What have they done?

A And instead of using that, they abuse it. I mean I see it. Sometimes maybe I feel a little guilty like maybe I got some prejudice in me. But I see a lot of 'em that don't want to work or don't want to do this, or... and ah, they're always crying that you know, discrimination in this and that, and I hear other white guys saying this, and I feel like hey I'm supposed to be kind of a liberal here, but I kind of feel that way myself sometimes. But that's how I feel

with women too. I feel like hey, you know women, they all of a sudden got all this freedom, so what happens, half of them are leaving their husbands. And it's... Instead of saying hey I got some freedom to do what I want to do, they were running out with all the guys around. Party time.

Q Did that happen in your situation?

A I'm not sure, but I have my... I think it might have happened. It has really, doesn't matter to me now.

Q There was a book written by a black women author, Alice Walker. The name of the book was Let the Caged Birds Sing. What it is about, it is a metaphor, Jimmy Bonzo(?) was talking about, he would say, blacks struggled so hard for civil rights you know for a hundred, two hundred years. Once these legal changes took place, it was like letting a herd out of a cage. It didn't mean let everybody who was ready to figure what the hell to do with it, as a matter of fact, they were not ready. No people is ready when you get out of jail. But for some of the reactions, it was a good metaphor what she used, because I think that there is truth to it. Because during that, slaves, racists, I mean extreme racists, were not prepared for it. What did blacks ever govern besides funeral homes and a few churches. Then it was corrupt and Coleman Young is as sleazy as any Mayor Daly or anybody, he's nothing special. When you look at the plant... Did you want to say anything particularly more about your family right now?

Q Yea. There was somewhere I was going with that. Well, I don't mind that what I was talking about, as far as my ex-wife being free,

whatever, to me that has no... it doesn't matter now, but I don't look at that. Even after I was all done with that, and referring to the black thing I was talking about, I really don't mind after I thought, and gave it a lot of heavy thought, I don't mind that I can see... After I thought about this, I could see that the responsibility and the freedom, exactly what you said just now, I can understand why they do do all these crazy things, I can understand why women, why it is like it is. Not so much as being mad about it, because I got divorced maybe over it. But I can, I'm thinking to myself maybe sometime in the future women will be able to learn that responsibility and maybe...

Q Have a chance to learn on their own sense?

A And well, maybe the blacks too will have to learn. So I'm, it's not like something I'm pissed about. But I learned it. But ah, there was some way I was going, oh, so something else I learned after I got divorced, then I will finish this up, is that when I did get divorced, see to me it's like being a uncle, like a lot of guys at work, I have a lot of guys that ah, they got to see those kids every week, and they get involved in this, this other life that they had before. You know, they get to 'em, something about that and there's always this battle going on for years and years. So when I got divorced, I seen myself as that you know, like a part-time dad. Like my wife now, I told her if anything ever happens between us, I won't be around, 'cause I'm not gonna be a part-time dad again. But that's how I feel. I still see my kids, but I don't see my other kids every, you know, every other

week and all that, and I told them why. I don't, I wish a lot of guys would see that nowadays. I would rather have a regular environment for my kids where they got a... she's married again, they got a father, and I don't need for my kids coming to me and telling me what he does to them and this and that. I've accepted that I... what it is like for me, because of the laws here. And you know, that men don't get the children, so I've accepted that part of being the part-time father and I only... I see my kids when I see 'em, and make it a good time. And I know they don't... they're not gonna get from me, what they would get if I was there, and I don't recommend for ah, I don't recommend for guys to be that involved.

Q It's got to be such an emotional overload trying to take care of your new family, and then, try to have all this. You know if you try the other way it's a very close, every weekend relationship with your kids it makes it so confusing. It's got to be so hard. I know people who have all different kinds of situations.

A I have a good relationship with my kids. But ah, this is like, I know they're taken care of. They get their money from me, and ah, I know they got a good family over there. They're well-off, and I know it doesn't matter if I was to knockoff today, I know they're in good shape. So this here, is my life, I'm on to a different life. But I do have a relationship with my other kids. And ah, they know who I am, they accept... See, realistically I accept the younger ain't gonna, but it's ah, in my heart I know, I wish them well. And I know I'll see 'em in the future.

Q In the plant, do a lot of people get divorced?

A Yea.

Q Do you think that the conditions in the plant and the overtime contributed to divorce or alcoholism or drugs?

A I think that they are so many things, I'm sure it does. But I mean, if you look at the country now, today, ah, how many people are wealthy, and I how many people are poor, I could say well if I had a million dollars, or ten million dollars, I would be married for the rest of my life. But it don't work that way. So I don't think it matters that much, I think what matters is, ah, the reason for divorces is so many things women's, like we were talking women's liberation, ah just society is different, it's fast-moving, people have different expectations.

Q What do you say when you are living comfortably now? What does that mean to you? What did you do for Christmas, this last Christmas, was it a comfortable Christmas? When did you get this boat? What did you pay for this boat?

A I don't pay much attention to those holidays except for where I have to. My daughter, me and my wife will get something little usually. But usually by the time Christmas gets here, there's so many other people to take of that you don't have much time to take care of yourself. And ah, so you know, during the year, is usually my Christmas or her Christmas. This year I did buy her a nice television, and ah... what were you gonna say?

Q What did she get you?

A Well, I just got some shirts and things, but I got that boat.

Q You got a boat?

A At the end of the year I got that boat. And I got these tools out here. I don't know, we do alright. I wish we didn't have all these holidays though, it's really...

Q You have another business now as well as working the plant right?

A Yea.

Q How much time does that take and if I can ask, how much income does that bring?

A Well, I have to think about it. It's not... We got rid of one of 'em. It's a janitorial service, I take... At one time, I worked at the plant, but I don't know I got into it or sucked into it, but ah, me and her started out... she started out cleaning some houses and somehow she ended up cleaning one office and somebody else asked her to clean an office. And pretty soon, she's making almost as much as I am, or she found out this one company was a big company, and ah, they not only had one big office, but they had a whole bunch of other little offices, and it was like she came to me and she said, geez, should we do this? And who's gonna help me... And I said, well maybe I could try. She talked to her sister about it, and I said well I can try it, but I don't know. 'Cause I had done this small office with her. So she asked me how much to charge, and I had no idea. But I had been in that cleaning business so, we had it open where we could... the first month we were gonna work down there and figure it out, 'cause... So I went down there, I started, geez I hope they

don't hear this. I've gone through all their... I found out how to read all their teletypes. And they had... I bet you I had brought home a stack this high and it would have ran all the way across that wall of those computer paper. And I new somewhere in those millions of pieces of paper, was the answer I was looking for. How much the previous guy charged them. Some how I found it.

Q You don't want this in the paper?

A No.

Q But you figured out what the other person charged...

A Well she was making about twenty-eight thousand.

Q A year?

A A year. Bun then you got certain expenses. It was an experience working with her. But I don't do that much now, except for floors once in a while.

Q What gets you the angriest when you look at Ford Motor Company?

A Right now?

Q Yes.

A I hardly ever get angry at 'em anymore.

Q How about when you look at the union?

A I don't really get at them either, but what I do, I accept and I have a different view of looking at it. I found out a long time ago that ah, at one time, I thought the union really wanted some people that were willing to fight. I mean I thought this... I guess it goes back to my grandfather, he was a pretty tough you know, standing up. And when I first got into this, I really thought that... You know I



hadn't really had to fight to be in a union, but one I got it I thought wow, they really, they really want someone to stand up and fight and all that. But it didn't take me too long to watch in the areas the guys that were... I don't know any other way to put it, but sucking the company's ass, were the same that the union guys were looking for the same kind of guys to suck their ass. And to me, the way I see it today, is that all throughout the union, I mean there might be a few cases, but I doubt it, that what happened somewhere, that all these suck asses are now sitting down at the glass house. I mean guys that really don't have a fighting thing in for 'em, but are just sitting there, just enjoying their lives, probably the way I'm enjoying this one here. And ah, I don't see it as a fighting union only a union that wants to just get by. And as they slowly sit there, getting by, that slowly they're gonna be picked apart, while their just laying there doing just enough to get by. And ah, I don't...

Q Do you think you need the union in this shop?

A Yea. As long as they last. Ah, I have, I don't feel like it's gonna be that way, but...

Q You don't feel it's going to be like what?

A Well, I'm not sure what's ahead. As the union is now, I think to me it feels like somethings gonna happen somewhere. I mean, you know I tried to fog it out, but I don't know that's gonna be people in the union that do something to the union or somewhere. But as the union is now, and the people that are running it, I see them slipping, and I don't know what the people are gonna do, but I feel like the people in

the plants or in the country whatever, somewhere along the line after all this concessions and... there's a end to that somewhere. Whether it's getting involved in a war someplace or whatever is gonna happen. You know there's something that's gonna happen there. But ah, as looking for someone to protect me or fight for me, I don't really look at it that way. I'm just trying to get by myself. But I don't see myself putting myself on the line for the union. But if I have to go out on strike, I'm sure I'll go out and enjoy it with 'em. And hopefully, they will, you know, the longer they can with hold it off, is better for me. I don't know what you meant by that, if the union's an answer for me or not. See 'cause I'm working with two personalities inside of myself. I'm working with the old... a lot of stuff I knew that I wish I didn't. I actually wish I... I'm glad I learned a lot things, but sometimes I wish I didn't know all this stuff, then I'd be a dummy that didn't have to sit here and worry about all these things. But I try... I don't think I worry a whole lot, but somewhere in the back of my mind, I know I'm... Sometimes maybe I'm crazy or something.

Q I think you're like most of us, there are many aspects to who you are. There are points where one aspect is more important than another and different parts come out depending on what you do.

A I don't know, gosh, I really don't know.

Q How about the E.I. program, do you think much of that?

A Well, after... I don't mean to bring up your book, but after reading Jeff Burke's... I knew there were a lot of people that felt like that

but...

Q Felt like what?

A I think guys were really into that. And it kind of...

Q Are more people into that E.I. program?

A No, not the majority of people. I think some of 'em like it... I mean I don't mind it. It's gotten me a few things.

Q What has it gotten you?

A Well, I do have a nicer area. I mean, but it's the sucking in see. The company's giving me a nice mat to walk on, a nice cafeteria and all that. But all the time I feel like it's a sucking in, and I think everybody in the plant feels that way. Everybody knows... I shouldn't say knows, 'cause I don't for sure, but everybody feels that the E.I. program is like sticking a carrot under our nose. You know it, but ah, those few people like Jack.

Q Cooper?

A Jack Cooper, don't mention his name. But after I read his article, he really... It's almost like he can see there's something wrong. Like when he said that one day the union won't be here, and that everybody will be salaried, and everything will be one sided is pretty much what he was talking about, and everything will be... It's that kind of, you got a person who don't want it to be that way. But he does, that's what I thought out of him. If he was gonna really think about what that meant.

Q What did that mean?

A Well, see my brother works Diesels. I went to ah, the other night, I

went to a Valentine's Dance.

Q G.M. Diesel?

A Yea, I like... I'm beginning to get at my age where my brother is always bugging me to be you know... They all like being close family, I don't. I like minding my own business when it comes to family. 'Cause being to close of a family with brothers and sisters when they get older, I found can cause a lot of problems too. But I think that time has past, now that we're real older. So I try to you know, go to some things. But he ah engineer at Diesels. And he's had a... I think he's finding out that sliding by... See he never went to school for this stuff, it's like all these engineers at these companies and things just kind of held these positions for a lot of years, and they never did the work, they just go around, and if someone says hey there's a screw missing here, I mean there ain't nothing with it, it's just how I feel, there's a lot of people... They would go down to the line man and ask the guy why is this screw missing, they might look at it a little bit, figure it out. But to actually no what an engineer is, I don't really think my brother's that smart. I think he's just kind of politics in the company, kind of faked it a lot of years, as well as a lot of other engineers. But I... when I was there at that party, he had a friend there... I have a brother-in-law that works at Diesels at the other Diesel Plant and he's on hourly, and he's beginning to think a lot different, more radical I think, except he doesn't know it. My brother had a friend there that was on salary and he started talking to me about Diesels is having a lot of

problems, Detroit Diesels, and they might sell the company 'cause all these problems at G.M.'s and he started talking to me about well gee, what do you think is gonna happen? You work at Fords well what about this profit sharing and you know, there gonna take it, and here this is a salary guy. You know I really didn't want to listen to all that. But ah, I think even there starting to worry about all this.

Q All the salary guys?

A Yea, engineers and big shots. There not gonna be with the, well not the technology, but the... See this cutting that these companies are doing, there is becoming a bigger gap I guess, between the rich and the poor, but a lot of these guys are getting shoved down now. I know there's a lot of people out there, what I make a hour or whatever, I know I'm doing as good as a lot of people that have been to school and all these, and they're starting to shove a lot of these people. They're having to cut into that now. They got to save some money out there, and they're starting to cut into those people that live out you know in a lot nicer houses. I don't know why I got on that subject.

Q You were talking about the changes that are going on in the company union relations. What are some concerns you have. Do you spend much time with people at the plant outside of work?

A Oh yea. Like ah, a lot of people that used to call me the radical... Oh, I'll tell you something that happened when I did get out of the politics in the union. One day there was some guy standing around me. At one time, I guess maybe this is a little racist on my part, but we have a lot of southern people or hillbillies, and ah, a lot

ah... Or even just regular guys I... maybe I refer to 'em as hillbillies, and ah, the ones that were racist and things like that. Well, at one time I kind of... I always looked for them guys. Like ah, they were the red necks you might say. So ah, but I started going hunting with 'em, doing a few things. I mean there was even a guy that's really, I mean he was in Vietnam, I ended up becoming best friends with him, and he always called me a commie. But I went hunting with him, and he said you know, you ain't so bad. But ah, anyway I started. One day, I looked at couple of these guys and I got tired of being commie and everything else and I was through with doing things for other people. So I looked at a guy and I said, you know what? I said I'm gonna be a asshole just like you. I said I'm tired of doing all this stuff. You know being called all of these names, I said I just want to be regular guy just like you, an asshole. And I got pretty good at.