

Jeff Cooper

R: Why don't you just say a few words to give it a test?

J.: Okay, I'm here for a very interesting proposition, I think.

R: All right Jeff, you were just talking about that you were going to write a book about the Jungle. Tell me a little bit about that.

J.: I think the factory is like a city, broken up into subdivisions. And different people live in their certain areas and just like the normal subdivision, you have some people that get involved with other things and then you have some people that you hardly know your next door neighbor. That's just the type of person they are. And that's very true in the plant. Cuz, ahh, certain people, they go in there just to do there job. Where other people, they want sort of a social type of interaction in the plant. Which I'm one of those people. I'd much prefer to mingle in a different "subdivision," so to speak.

R: How come you like to do that?

J.: Cuz I like people and I love to talk. (R: Uh, uh) I've been accused of never shutting up. As a matter of fact, some people say that I'm the biggest bullshitter they've ever met. I don't know if that's true. If you can't dazzle 'em with ability, you baffle 'em with bullshit.

R. What are the kinds of things you'd write about if you were going to write a book about the plant?

J: How it affects people...different people perceive their job in the factory different. They, ahh, for years there was a

stereotype of the factory workers - beer drinkin, big belly, loud-mouthed, trouble-causing and, ahh, I suppose that was probably true back when the unions were forming and the company was the enemy and the union was the strength. And as times has evolved to where competition has come up, where before we had the market. If Detroit built it, people bought it. And now we have world market that we're not the best anymore. We still might be the biggest, but Americans have a choice, a real choice, and being the type of people that we are, we buy what we like, we don't necessarily buy American just to, just cuz that's the right thing to do. Which I honestly believe it is. I think it's terrible that people buy foreign cars.

But as times changed, the people in the plants have changed. People have a choice and that makes us, as we get smaller and smaller, our jobs become more and more important. And certain people deal with that in different ways. You still have your real strong union-minded people, meaning 40ish, 50ish type of union, which we are no longer that way due to necessity. Things have changed.

So now we have in the plant which goes city by city, we have the different political groups, so to speak, within the union. You have your far right people who are very much into change. Then you have your liberals who don't want to change. They think it should still be dog eat dog, the company's the enemy, and the union's the, we're the guys who are right. And I don't think that's always true. I mean, uh, we go there to make money. You can make a lot of money. If you just show up you make a lot of

money. So that's the idea I had for a book.

R: Why don't we explore some of those? Okay, then we'll have plenty of time to get into some of the changes. I mean, which, you see a lot of diversity in the plant now?

J.: Yeah. I feel...

R: And if you can, how do you know there's that diversity? How do people act, what do they say?

J: Well, I do a newspaper, I do a newsletter, and it's funded through the company. And I have to walk this narrow...I mean, I'm an hourly person, I'm a UAW man, and I have to walk this narrow line cuz I can't leave my roots, you know, and "be company" but I have to "be company" to a certain degree because of the job that I'm performing with the newspaper. And I catch a lot of flack from people on the line who don't understand how I try to sit on that fence. I always try to balance things out. Now, some issues might come out where there's more about company people, management people, you know, foremens, upgrading, but ahh, I catch a lot of the, I see a lot of the real strong pro-union/anti-company resentment that's still there, still around.

R: It's still there? Uh, uh.

J: Yeah, and there's also a lot of people, I would say most people, are going with the changes. They realize that in order for us to survive, we have to be competitive.

Now, granted, a lot of people might not agree with what competitive means. And then you have your robotics coming in and people's, that is taking jobs. I mean, attrition is happening. And, ahh, forced reduction is happening. And that's a fact of

life, that's something that we as a union have no control over. It's not our business. We just work here. I mean, if I owned it it would be different. But I don't own this place. I just work here. I make my money here. I support my family here. And, I hope I can work for awhile. And if the time comes where I lose a job, well, I lose a job.

But I feel that by working as a team, we can save jobs. More than, it's the quality. If we built good products, I mean if we truly built good products, people will buy our products. Americans buy the best. I mean, they don't have to buy anything less. And I honestly feel that if we built good products, we can keep our jobs. I mean, we're going to lose so many jobs, that's inevitable. We're gonna lose jobs. People are gonna lose jobs. But if we keep going the way we're going, it'll happen through attrition, to some degree. There'll always be layoffs. That's a fact of life in the '80's and '90's and who knows what's going to happen beyond 1990, but, ahh, the teamwork thing has to work.

R.: Why don't you talk a little more about what the newspaper is, the newsletter that you put out and about this teamwork?

J.: My newsletter, it's basically just a plant information. You know, just, just...

R: How did it get started, how long have you been doing it?

J: Well, I worked at Wayne Assembly for 7 years and I was on afternoons and I hated my job. I didn't hate necessarily what I did, I just hated working afternoons. I mean, it was the pits. I had a family and we was working 10 hours like we do here. And I was going in at 6 in the evening and getting off at 5 in the

morning. It just stunk. I didn't like it at all.

Finally, they laid me off in March of '83. The first time I'd ever been laid off and I thought "Great. Here we are no job. Unemployment." Then the reality set in. You know, what all these other people had been experiencing, it happened to me. Well, five weeks later, I got a call from Woody Clark who is the personnel manager at the Truck Plant and he told me that I was hired there, to come in for a physical. So I went in. And I started on days. There was only one shift. And it was great. I mean, the job, I worked harder than I ever worked at Wayne Assembly. They put me on the merry-go-round in chassis which is where they built the front ends for the trucks. And work was work at the Truck Plant.

R: What on the front end?

J: The front end of the truck - fenders, the front, the grill, the lights, fender walls, you know it's the merry-go-round. They call it the merry-go-round, I don't know why. It's not merry at all.

R: But it goes around?

J.: It goes around. And people built the front end. And, ahhh, employe involvement was different at the Truck Plant than it was at the car plant. It was still basically new, It'd been around a couple of years. But different plants were perceiving it differently and the merry-go-round had a very strong EI circle, which basically means that certain number of the people in the area. Not all of them, but a good number of them met on Wednesday afternoons up in the conference room for an hour, they got paid.

R: This was after work?

J: This was after work, yeah, and they got paid. And they just talked about problems. Problems anywhere from oil comin' out hoists to bolts not goin' in, case nuts bein' off, bad clips, bad metal. Just problems. How they could improve quality and improve their jobs, which, basically go hand-in-hand. And I got involved with this EI group and I eventually ended up being co-leader of the group. Jesse Kidd was our leader and whenever he had something to do I would run the meeting, which was ahh, which was all right.

R: What did it mean to run the meeting?

J: Well, somebody has to keep the flow going, you know. Ahh. Make sure that, yeah you gotta stay away from contractual issues and you got a lot of people who have opinions, which is great. And a lotta people see things differently, which is not what EI is and that's where it's misconstrued.

R: Explain that a little because I don't understand it. What's contractual issues and what aren't contractual issues?

J.: Well, you know, usually contractual is something that's in our contract books, between the union and management as to how jobs are performed and how people are supposed to be treated. Fans, water fountains, that's all in the contract. You know, there's certain rules and standards that have to be met. And that's not what EI is supposed to touch. EI is supposed to touch, ahhh, jobs, quality, how ahh, bad parts, bad stock. Stuff that normally gets thrust under the rug due to the nature of the business, the production. You know, the bottom line is we gotta build X amount of trucks a day in order for the plant to be, ahh,

productive, in order for the plant to make a profit there has, they have to get the trucks out. That's why you hear a lotta people say quality is job 1, well really, quantity is job 1. And to a degree that's true. Cuz if they can't, if each plant can't make a profit then the whole company goes down and then everybody loses.

So, EI came in, some Japanese have been using it for years. They started their business with EI. And, ahh, I think EI, if it's used properly, can be a very good thing. But there's abuse, I mean, ahh, I don't feel that somebody should eliminate a job through EI, which is possible. I've seen it happen.

R.: Did that happen?

J: Yeah.

R.: Do you have any examples of that? That question, plus, who was taking care of these problems before?

J: Nobody. I mean, if you had..

R: How come management wasn't doing it?

J: Cuz that's not the way business was run. You see, business was different, it was dog-eat-dog. You came in, you hated your foreman, your foreman hated you. You had a coexistence only out of necessity. You, you remember how it was Rich?

R: No, I don't. I want you to explain it to me.

J: You, you did your job and you hoped that they didn't mess with you. I mean, Labor Relations was the place that you went when you were in trouble. All right, trouble being anywhere from poor and careless workmanship to not following, they used to have so many, so many stupid things they would write you up for.

R: Do you remember any of them?

J: Well, poor and careless workmanship, or failure to follow a direct order. You know, the foreman tells you to do something and you get a drink of water and he writes you up for not following a direct order. Those days are gone, and EI has helped smooth it. Now EI is good right now, but it's not as good as it should be cuz there's a lot of formens who are like a lot of hourly people. They go to the old school. They don't see things as changed. They see things how they used to be. And until the foremens become totally committed to EI, like a lot of the hourly people, not a whole lot but a number of 'em are, then EI will work good if the foremens have the same attitude toward quality and human relations as some of the hourly workers do.

You figure, a lot of the hourly workers in the plant today are there because there was no room for advancement. I mean, being on one shift and, you know, it used to be, on two shifts, the turnover was incredible. Back in the '70's, they would hire 200 people a day and probably 180 of 'em would quit. And there was always room to get a better job, to go relieve, to do something. But anymore, especially the truck plant with one shift, there is no room for advancement. We have a very controlled type of society today. We have X amount of repairmen, they don't need anymore. If a guy retires, that's kinda just absorbed, he's not replaced.

R: What is absorbed?

J: Attrition, they ahh, people who retire, they're not replacing them anymore. It used to be, you know, one guy left there,

another guy'd take his place. But now, they're, instead of layin' off they're just lettin' that job go. They're just, they're just lettin' it just...

R: So the number of workers at the plant has gone down?

J: Oh yeah, right now we have about, we just hired some more but I feel they're temporary. We have probably 1200, no probably 1100 hourly people in the plant. And that's skilled trade, maintenance, the whole shot, production. And, after the launch and the balance, by Christmas time we'll probably be back down to about 1150, which, we run at about 1150. I know that from the facts for the newspaper.

But getting back to how I got the newspaper going. I go off on tangents a lot, I've been accused of that too.

I got into the EI group and I always had aspirations to write. I always wanted to be a writer. I ahh, when I was in high school I, my mother's best friend was the operator for the two plants, the Wayne Assembly and the truck plant. And one day, we was in church and I said, 'Hey, Maryellen, how about gettin' me a job at Ford's?' I was a senior in high school, this was in early May. And I was just basically teasing. My whole family was GM. You know, if I was gonna work in a factory it would probably be GM. I mean, if anybody in my family works at a factory, they're General Motors. And, ahh, so the next day, this was on a Sunday, the next day, she calls my ma, I'm at school and she says 'I got Jeff an appointment to see a guy name Charlie', I forget his last name, he does what Woody Clark does at Wayne Assembly. She says, "He's gotta be there tomorrow, which is Tuesday, at 9 o'clock."

So bein' a young, dumb kid, I put my suit on and went into the old factory and I'm lookin' around at all these guys in blue jeans and t-shirts and ahh...

R: What kind of suit, do you remember? What did you think that day?

J: Ahh, well you see, I didn't know what to think. I just was lookin' for a job. I just figured if I could get a job, great. You know, I knew what kind of money you make. My brothers at the time were in factories. One of my brothers was a security guard at Fleetwood Cadillac and the other one worked in the cushion room at Fleetwood Cadillac. And I just kind of assumed that if I wanted to work in the factory that I could go to Fleetwood or I could go to where my father works at Fisher Body in Livonia and I just happened to throw this off to Maryellen Henry.

And so I went in on the Tuesday, it must have been the 11th of May in '76 and I walked up there and I said, I mean, the room was full. It was the personnel room and it was full of people and I'm in a suit, you know. It was really quite, quite funny. You know, I'm young, 18 years old, green, you know, and ahh. So I walk up and say 'Hi, my name is Jeff Cooper. I'm supposed to see a guy named Charlie.' I forget his last name. And he says, he happened to be the guy, and he says 'Oh yeah, Maryellenn Henry sent you, didn't she?' And I said yeah, and he says, 'Well, come on back.' So you know, I walk in and I walk back and these people are lookin' at me, you know. I guess they're good friends so.

So anyhow he says, I fill out some applications and he says, 'Looks good, we'll give you a physical. You're gonna get the

job.' And I says, 'Well, terrific.' This just fell in my lap, you know. I had no intentions of doing this. And so I ahh,

R: What did you think you were gonna do when you got out of high school?

J: I was gonna go to college. I was gonna be a writer, either a writer or a lawyer. That was what I wanted to do. And, so anyhow I ended up gettin' the job and it started the next day. And I was in school and I went to school and got home and my ma said, 'Ford called, you gotta be there at 5:30.' So I worked 10 hours that night. I thought I went to hell. I couldn't believe what people did for money. I couldn't believe it. It totally, totally amazed me how hard these people worked. We were, at the time we were building Granadas and we built, I think it was 64 an hour. And they had me working the trim and I was hooking up the wires under the dash. Wire and metal. I ripped my pants on the third job, didn't have any coveralls, and sat on my bare butt for nine hours. I couldn't believe it.

But anyhow, I felt I was tough and, you know, I was gonna do it. And so I ended up learning the job and I ended up gettin' my 90 days in and then we went on strike and it was great. I had six weeks off and it was cool. Anyway, I finally got laid off, came over to the truck plant, got involved in the EI group like I said. And I got to know the EI leaders, which at the time was Brent Sheldon and Lee Thornsberry. And I told them, I says, 'Why don't we have a newspaper?' And, at the time I was going through Dale Carnegie which is a very good thing, I don't know if you've been through it (R: No I haven't.). It's really good, you should

do that. My confidence was real high and I had a lot of faith in myself and I said, 'If we ever get a newspaper going, I would like to be a part of it. I'd like to be the editor, but I'd like to be a part of it.' And they said, 'Well, we had one for a couple months but it just kept gettin' shut down so we don't have one.' So I said, 'Well, if it ever comes up, keep me in mind.'

So Christmastime of '84, we had just won a 250 Award at the plant.

R: What is that?

J: It's where ahh, they have a NAOVA quality audit.

R: Explain that, what is a NAOVA quality audit?

J: Well, NAOVA is North American Operations Vehicle Audit. Which is, it's an in Ford systems audit where they send the same group of people all over the city to the assembly plants and they audit 20 vehicles at random. They're not chosen by the plant, supposedly this is how it works, they're not chosen by the plant they're just 20 vehicles that this group picks and they look at 'em from a customer's point of view and they find defects. Defects can range from a half-a-point to a whole point, meaning, ahh, for instance, a dent in the metal is something that a customer would probably complain about and that would be a whole point. And they set it up, at the time the Japanese were averaging about 250 defects per 1,000 vehicles. Which sounds like a lot but in the business of putting cars and trucks together that's not very many.

R: 250 defects per...

J: Per 1,000 vehicles. All right, or maybe it's per 100, it may

be per 100. And that was what the guideline that was set for being world class. But not it's down to 200. The Japanese have, once again, got better and now the true audit would be 200. And like a defect would be a scratch in the paint or windshield wipers that don't work. Anything that a customer would complain about, would take in for warranty repairs. And, Ford had set it up where any plant that had 3 NAOVA audits under 250 in a row, they won a special award, which was called the 250 Award. And we had won our first one at that time. And there was a new assistant plant manager, Nick Herlinian (Name?) at the plant and he asked the EI people, he says, 'Why don't we have a newspaper?' And Lee Thornsberry said, 'Well, we have a man who wants to do one. But we just have never got it going.' And Herlinian says, 'Well, I'd like to meet this guy.' So they came down to me on Wednesday, two days before the Friday for Christmas shutdown, we were gonna have a 250 Award where Sherwood, he's the, he was the head of body assembly, regional manager at the time, and his party would come to the plant to give us this banner, the 250 banner. Which was, we were the first full-sized truck plant to get one. Louisville had gotten one before but they build the Ranger, they don't build the full-size.

And he came up to me, on the line, on the merry-go-round, puttin' the front ends together and he told me, he says, ahhh, 'If you can have me a paper by Friday, it's your job.' So I said, 'Sure, no problem.' So he left and I said, 'Shit, what did I get myself into?'

So I, so they gave me, that was Wednesday, 7 o'clock in the

morning and I had Wednesday, Thursday to put together a paper. And Friday was the big schmiel, where they had all the people, you know. So I put together a four-page little yellow, I named it and set up the format. Had some great stories about the 250 award and Al Thornsberry, Lee's brother, had bowled a 300 game recently, so I put that in there.

R: What else was in it?

J: Ahhh, why I explained what a NAOVA audit was, and they gave away points awards at the dinner.

R: This was at Christmastime then, so they had that big cake?

J: Yeah, the first, it was the last Friday before Christmas is when this paper came out. So, in two days, I pulled it off. All right. I got a lot of accolades for it. They thought it was great that an hourly man could do something like it. I mean, it wasn't nothing. Compared to my paper right now, this thing was junk. But, the time and the situation, it wasn't too bad. I was proud of it. I put a lot of work into it. It was all in plant. We had to type it and lay it out and, you know, it was a lot of work.

R: And you did the art work and the headlines, and everything?

J: Yeah, I set it all up. Now I don't, I use graphics people. I was bad, so, anyhow, that's how I started the newspaper and I had total control. I mean, I'm not censored, which is unusual because I went to a workshop. That's why, I'm a different kind of autoworker cuz I have a little more power than some people.

R: What do you mean it's not censored? You can put anything you want into this?

J: Yeah, I can, I basically don't have to answer to anybody. But

I'm smart enough to realize that certain things I don't touch. Like, a lot of times people will approach me about something they don't like and they'll ask me to do a story on it. Well then I use my judgment whether or not I can touch it. Cuz I don't want to lose me job. And I can be very political, I have a lot of opinions, a lot of things I don't like. But I know that that doesn't belong in a newspaper that's trying to appeal to both management and hourly people. So, ahh, no I'm not censored. I don't have to answer to anybody. I don't have to have my stories approved.

R: But, it's clear that the goal of the paper is to keep the morale, to keep the morale of the guys high in relation to productivity and being part of the Ford family? Right?

J: Yeah, that's the idea. The idea is to show that, as a team, we can do anything. Now putting aside individuals, putting aside personalities, and thinking of the common goal, team work is a group of people working towards a common goal. And these people come from all areas of society. You have a lot of people in there who make enough money on the outside of the plant where they don't need the job. And, well the newspaper, that's what I try. I try to keep morale high, I try to include a lot of different people. I always try to find out, if someone does something unusual in their spare time. Like, for instance, we have a guy in trim who makes guitars. And he sells them to rock and roll bands. Bernie Hamburger. He's incredible. And, ahhh, so I did a story on him. And that made him feel good, that made the people he works with, that made his family feel good. People feel better about

themselves. There's something about getting your name in print, or your picture in print, that makes people feel good. And the newspaper is a vehicle that I can do this with. And having total control over the newspaper, being hourly, is quite unusual in this type of system.

But, like I said before, I know, I draw my own lines. I know what I'm not gonna touch. And I'll explain to people. I'm not gonna do that.

R: You mean, if I wanted to write an article, like the one article that upset me was the one by the guy in crib, I think, about buying America. And why that upset me was, here we are assembling parts that are made in Mexico, the Phillipines and there's such a contradiction there. Ford just bought, the Korean company, just bought...you don't talk about those things. You know.

J: You're right.

R: How come?

J: Cuz, there's a lot of things that people know, there's a lot of things. Buying American, the way I see the "buy what you build" type thing, all right. We have a choice. You know, I could go out tomorrow and I could buy me a Toyota pickup truck which would be a very fine truck. Or I could buy, if I was in that sized market, I could buy me a Ford Ranger, which is also a very fine truck. Now, different surveys will show that different trucks are better. Now, by buying a Ford Ranger, even though it's built with a certain amount of foreign parts, it's still built in America by American people who have families to support and the

majority of the parts are made by American suppliers with the whole network, you know the network for the whole automobile industry is incredible.

R:What do you mean?

J: The network meaning the small shops that make our parts. The majority of our units are built with American-made parts. I mean, we have, you know...

R: At this point.

J: At this point. It's a matter of competition. You know, that's why they're buying, they're running Japanese condensers for the AC's, on some models. On the bigger engines we have a bigger condenser, it comes from Japan. I think it's from Mazda. You know, we have an affiliation with Mazda, which I always, along the same lines you said, I always found it funny that the company is saying buy American and they import, especially Dodge, they've been famous for importing foreign cars and putting the Dodge label on it, the Colt for instance.

But buying American, there's certain things we have no control over. I mean, how Ford chooses to do their business. I mean, I have about as much control over that as I do what kind of hamburger I'm gonna get from McDonald's. You know, there's certain variables that you can't touch. We aren't in the position to touch. But the buy what you build thing, if we buy American-built products, there's X amount of people who are going to benefit from buying that Ford or that General Motors or that Chrysler product. Even though there are foreign parts being used. I mean, there's enough, like this Panasonic radio, there's enough

foreign products that we have no choice over. That there is no American-made product. I mean, trying to find a pair of American-made shoes, or for instance, baseball gloves, if you go to buy a baseball glove, your typical, your Wilson, your Rawlings, your Spalding, they're all assembled in Taiwan. American products, shipped over there and they let the cheaper people build them. Some things we have no choice in. It's hard to find an American-made baseball glove, as funny as that sounds, it's the truth.

R: Do you feel that you have a responsibility to, ahhh, my only point is not, is that it's more complicated than it ends up appearing. Whether it's your newsletter or newspaper, it's not much different. And it doesn't seem so complicated when the story that's run, in the UAW papers too, in the Local 900 paper, the same story, the same piece was written. That, you wake up in the morning and turn on your Japanese radio and you put on your Taiwan tie and you go out looking for a job, that story. It makes it seem so simple, that I have a lot of difficulty with it. It's not that there aren't contradictions.

J: There's very much contradictions. I feel that Americans, people owe to each other, especially in Detroit. You know, this whole economy, well, it's being diversified now, but for years we were dependent on the auto industry. And Detroit, it's different than most of the country. The majority of the cars you see on the road are American-made due to the fact that, if a guy owns a party shop in Wayne, if he wants to get a lot of Wayne's business, he better be driving an Escort or a Ford truck, or something, cuz a lot of people will see that he's buying their

products and they'll patronize his store. If he's driving a Toyota or a Datsun or something, then people's going to say, 'Well, screw this guy. He don't care about my job, why should I care about his?'

Hopefully, that's what people think. You know, that's the type of thinking we need to have. Because, jobs are not easy to come by. I mean, I'd hate to lose my job and go work for McDonald's for \$3.35 an hour. I'm not used to that, it would destroy me, having to take a cut in pay. And you go outside the com..., outside the midwest, which is the heart of the industry, like to the west coast or the east coast, like I was in Virginia for a vacation, and it's amazing the number of foreign vehicles you see. It's amazing. Cuz they don't see a direct link to jobs, cuz there's no auto, there's no big industry down there. So, it's easy to go buy a Toyota or a Datsun.

But, to buy what you build, even though we have no control over what's in it, we do have some control over who is benefitting from buying that car. And, it's not just the company that benefits. It's every guy on that assembly line who is supporting his family. He's got kids he wants to send to school, he wants to get his children a good life, he wants to take care of his wife and if we don't take it upon ourselves to buy, within reason, as many American-made products as we can then we're gonna lose, our way of life, our lifestyle.

R: Do you think that, then I'll move off this a little, do you think that the buy American on one hand builds a commitment to other Americans, but does it also build on a distaste or a hatred

or blaming the Japanese for no jobs here?

J: I think it was that way before, but, Americans are basically a smart people and they basically understand, I mean, how many people do you see in the plant every day reading the newspaper?

And I'm not saying, reading the sports, reading world affairs. The world's messed up and people understand that there's certain variables they have no control over. Like, what happens in Russia, what happens in Afghanistan. You know, as much as that might hurt us, we really can't do anything about it. We can't really do anything about how Ronald Reagan deals with Gorbachev. You know, we have ahhh, I mean, you can write to your congressman but unless you vote somebody out, which the mass of people usually chooses not to vote, we, the only things we can control is our own little cities, our own little societies. And, the theory of democracy is, by keeping your backyard clean, then that spreads to the other guy's backyard. And, by keeping a strong foundation, the whole country stays strong. That's why the family is so important in our society. That's why we're the envy of the world, at least we were until the women started becoming more independent and leaving their families. But what made America strong was our foundation, it was family. The foundation was taking care of each other, was taking care of each other. And, we have to think along those lines in order for us to stay as strong as we are.

You know, I still feel America's strong. I mean, Russia, they're a definite source to be reckoned with, but it's a no-win situation. I really don't see a - totally off on a tangent - a

war between Russia and the United States. If there's going to be a war, it'll be some little country like Libya or some off-the-wall country's going to start, gonna mess things up. Cuz, in the nuclear age, nobody wins. And the superpowers realize that. Being a human being, I have to feel that way, otherwise, we have no hope. And I like to think we have hope.

But, the American-made products, I feel, we should buy as many as we can. Like, whenever I go shopping for shirts or something, I always, I try to buy something that says, 'Made in the USA.' I just feel that that's, I'm doing what I can do. I can't always do that. My television's not made in the USA. Show me one that's made in the USA.

R: RCA. It's the only one.

J: Yeah, RCA. There's one out of how many hundreds of different brands. And, then again, your dollar speaks strongest. And, if I can buy the same TV for half the price, it's hard, you know, it's hard to buy that American-made product. But if, if enough Americans get to the point where we'll only buy American-made products, then the prices will come down. And that's what John Elkins is trying to do with his USA label thing, you know, made in the USA. Trying to say that, if enough people do it, if enough people refuse to buy the foreign products, then that's when things will turn around. It's not like it can happen tomorrow.

R: Let me ask you another question. Why doesn't the, why don't, we demand that the corporation be prevented from buying Japanese corporations? Or Korean corporations?

J: Do we have that power?

R: It's our government, isn't it?

J: Oh yeah, well, that's another thing too. You see, ahh, right now we have a president that's very much a believer in free enterprise and what free enterprise is, you can basically do anything you want, with no government intervention. I mean, we have a land of opportunity. And that's very true. That's even true today. Like, you're gonna write a book. You might, you might become wealthy off your book, you might start a whole new career, cuz you have that opportunity, you're an American. You live in a country where you're afforded rights. You have the ability to do whatever you want in this country. And that's what Mr. Reagan believes as far as trade. And trade's killing us. But see he feels that Americans are the leaders and it's up to the leaders to turn things around, and, until that happens, that goes down to the people too, not just the corporations, that goes down to the people too. Until the people decide enough is enough, then that what won't happen and our trade deficit gets bigger and bigger every year.

I'm a firm believer, if it was up to me, I would stop Japanese cars from coming into the country.

R: Would you stop Ford Motor Company from buying a Japanese corporation, right? I mean, Mazda, the Mazda plant just got a tax break, part of the tax reform bill.

J: Yeah, but by 1990 over a million units a year will be built in this country.

R: Over two million. Over 2.2 million.

J: Over two million. 2.2 million will be built here. But, if

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people are going to buy foreign products, don't you feel it's better they buy the ones that were built by American workers. You see, at least, you're creating jobs. You're not solving no problems, but at least, at least Americans are benefitting from the job and economy.

R: So it's better than nothing.

J: It's better than nothing. I honestly feel that the auto industry as we know it is definitely changing.

R: What do you think it's going to change into? What do you see it is doing?

J: Eventually, I feel, that, one day, it might be 10, 15 years, but not too long, everybody in the industry will be as a salaried person. There won't be an hourly and a management work force. There'll be, there'll be grades, I guess the salary would have grades. You'll be a salaried. That way they can get commitments and they can get the quality they want. And, that's just my opinion. That's how I feel. That's what I feel is happening. Like, you notice, with our insurances and stuff, eventually we're gonna lose the choice that we have. They call it competitiveness but it's just cheaper. It's cheaper for Ford Motor Company to pay health care to one place. That's why you've seen the HAPs come along and the HMOs, eventually, just like we lost our vision, now we go to Sterling. Now, we have one contract they pay. Sterling. So, it used to be like when Blue Cross was the only one. It used to, that's something that's gonna happen, I feel. And, in order for this stuff to be brought into the system without a whole lot of whitewashing - that's the wrong word - without a whole lot of

trouble, salaried is definitely a possibility.

R: You think that's a possibility. Okay, ahh, you said that you're a UAW member as well, what do you think will happen with the UAW?

J: I think we'll always have the UAW and I hope we do. I hope that's always a factor. There has to be a voice for the working man. And we are definitely working men. We work hard and most of us do a good job. Most of us earn our money. I mean, you have a certain percentage of people that are going to take a free ride. And that hurts all of us, but I feel 95% of autoworkers in this country work in the factories to earn their money to support their families. I mean, it might not be their preferred job but they make a decent living at it. And they live better than most people in the world. They have nice houses, they drive, they can buy a new car. They can afford to feed their families well.

R: What would be the role of the UAW if everyone's salaried in your vision of the futur?

J: They would just keep things on the level, they'd just keep human rights there. Like, there's so many of us compared to management. I mean, you don't need a whole lot of cooks to make a bowl of soup, you know, but you need a lot of ingredients in the soup. And that's what we are. We're ingredients. We're a very necessary evil to the company. We're the means by which they make profits. And profits are good for all of us. I mean, people think profits mean big business. That's not true. Profits are good for all of us. The better Ford Motor Company does as a business, the more people work, the better our salaries are and the easier it

is for our union to negotiate benefits.

Like, for instance, this education thing. That is a great program.

R: Tell us about it. Why do you think it's so good? And what is it?

J: It's offering, the tuition assistance program is offering autoworkers a means by which to increase their capacity as human beings, by learning or by learning a hobby, however they choose to use the program, but there's no out-of-pocket expense to get a degree. You could go through your master's, you could go through 15 years of college and other than buying your own books and providing your own transportation, everything else is paid for. Labs, classes, tutoring, anything you want is paid for. Which is an excellent benefit. It's a shame only 5% of the people use it.

R: Is that the number?

J: That's the last figure I heard. 5% take advantage of it. But see that's, the company realizes that, they realize that by offering this not everybody's going to take advantage of it and it's not going to cost them a lot of money. But it's a negotiated thing. I mean, the union is chipping in too. Five cents of every hour we work, the nickel fund it's called, goes to this fund, and then the companies - GM, Ford and Chrysler - they match it. It's kinda like the stocks. What you buy, they buy. And it's a good program. Like for instance, we had a man in the trim shop - Al Rimly - who was laid off for four years. And while he was off, he used this tuition assistance and got his engineering degree and came back to work and now he's an engineer. He upgraded his life.

Now he might not...His job might not be any better, but he has got a better job by going to school. And Ford paid for it. Ford and the UAW, I can't give the credit to Ford. It's Ford-UAW.

We have good benefits.

R: Let me ask you, you were saying before about, well why don't you talk about the benefits a little and then, you were saying, that the profit sharing has not really worked out so well, in relationship to cost, getting wage increases.

J: We gave up our 3% annual raises, which was a UAW thing for 30 years. Every year we got a 3% raise, which is just how it worked. And back when the recession was real bad and people were losing jobs, the union and management agreed to not get an annual salary increase and keep our wages basically the same and we'd get profit sharing. So that gave an incentive to everybody to build better quality, sell more cars and trucks and therefore make more profits. But it also gave - this is my opinion - it also gave the company the option to spend those profits. Cuz whether or not they spend them to improve their facilities, if they don't do that they have to pay 'em to us. I mean, it's contractual. So we're seeing a lot of things in the plants today that, I feel, wouldn't be there if, if the ahhh.

R: What kind of things have you seen?

J; Well, just the ah, not so much the automation. Automation's gonna happen. They would spend that money anyway. But like, ah, for instance, computer classes. Our plant funded the room, I mean, and then they, through the UAW, and then we have a computer class inside the plant. They gave space and they provide the

electricity and the air conditioning. It cost the company money; it benefits everybody. But that's something that I feel, that is coming out of the new wave of thinking.

The weight room. I don't know if you know this Rich. We're building a weight room in the locker room. They've took out 500 hundred lockers on the cafeteria side of the locker room and they've got a floor in there and we're, by the time you come back to work there'll be weights in there. There's supposed to be a ping pong table.

See, that's money that's being spent that normally, that I don't think would have been. But, through profit sharing those things are available. And it's gonna benefit everybody. I mean, the camaraderie is going to be stronger. And that's the way of business in the '80's.

R: Explain why the camaraderie is important and also how has quality improved over the last 5 years?

J: Well quality has definitely improved. We're building better quality today with half the work-force than 10 years ago.

R: How do you know it's better quality?

J: Well, statistics and customer satisfaction have improved and it's better quality. Warranty repairs, it's, you can rest assured that factually we build better cars and trucks today than we did 10 years ago. But 10 years ago, quantity was the rule. I mean, as many cars as we built in the middle '70's as many as, after the recession of '74, the oil embargo, as many as we built, they'd buy. I mean, it was that way for years in our system. And then that's when the Japanese, it was the late '60's-early '70's, that

was when the Japanese took it to all the small car makers. Because they were building something that America wanted. And the Big Three, the American auto industry wasn't. The American auto industry was interested in profits which is typical of all business. You know, profits. You want to duplicate yourself. If you start McDonald's in Indiana, then you realize that, if you open up another one, 15 miles down the road, then for, almost the same cost, you can sell twice as many. Then, once you get that going, you open up a third, then by duplicating yourself, you can increase your profits tremendously. And profits is the bottom-line in business.

That's basically how business runs is on profits. But profits isn't all strictly company. Profits, the union, that's where the UAW plays a role. They're the watch guards, they're the people, the elected people, that keep lookout for all of us. All of us who just go in and do our jobs every day. We're the ahh, we're the necessary evil. We're something that has to be there. And, the company's starting to realize that we're a lot more important to the industry than what they thought we were.

R: How do you know that?

J: Cuz our, we are the cause of profit, of quality. It's due to us, it's not due to management. It's the attitude of the people. I mean, the guy who put the bolt on who nobody sees, 99% of the time, he's putting that bolt in now. He's just, he has a different way of thinking. He's wanting to build quality. So, a certain amount pride's coming back. Which I try to deal with in my newspaper. I try to instill pride in workmanship. Cuz it

benefits all of us.

R: Where did we lose our pride? How come we lost our pride?

J: Due to bickering, and the dog-eat-dog system we had for years where the company was against the worker and the worker was against the company. It was just a necessary..

R: Workers were proud in the '30's.

J: Yeah, they were very proud in the '30's. People got lax cuz they were working, they were making money, there were jobs available. And quality was the rule. Then the war hit. Then the, there was great national pride during World War II where everybody was rationing things. They were giving their scrap. People who you would normally think weren't doing anything, they were ahh, taking scrap drives, they were collecting money and buying bonds. World War II really brought the country together for the first time in probably a hundred years. Where everybody was working for the common goal. That's when the civil rights movement started up. The black workers, the black people of our country at that time, were still basically second-class citizens. And here we were fighting a fascist regime in Germany and when America was practicing the same thing at home. In a different sort of way, but nevertheless, we were treating second-class citizens as second-class citizens. They, which it wasn't true, but that's how it was being treated. And, so that's how the civil rights came out of World War II. And then it increased through the '50's and then in the '60's, that's when, people said, 'Hey, wait a minute. If we can fight Hitler and his regime, how can we, how can we have two different bathrooms here in America. How can

we have two different restaurants, two different buses? That's not right. You want us black people to go fight a war and yet, here, we're not treated the same. And so it opened, national pride became a big issue. And, then, as things rolled on and civil rights, your Martin Luther King's your Malcolm X's, they rose up and a lot of people who never really thought about it, they says, 'Yeah, these guys are right. How can we, how can we be this way?' And today I feel that our society is better because of civil rights, it's better, cuz I feel that everybody has an equal, this is a melting pot you know, I mean, the, like they locked up the Japanese-Americans. They didn't bother to lock up the German-Americans during World War II. And the Germans, they didn't directly attack us, like the Japanese did, right? So the Japanese were our enemy. Well, along the same theory, the Germans were as much as enemy to us, and the Italians, they were as much an enemy to us as the Japanese were. But the way, the way the country thought at the time, it was different.

And, it comes out in the auto industry. We're people, we're Americans, we have, we probably have more diverse people at our plants than any other business. Due to the fact that, you know, years ago, jobs were easy to come by and you had a lot of people comin' from all over the country to the cities, to the steel mills, to the textile mills, to the auto industry to get a job. So you've got, you've got your native Europeans, you've got your native southern Blacks, your southern Whites and you've got your people who are by-products of this, which is like I am. I was born in Detroit due to the fact that my southern parents came to

Detroit to find a job. So I'm a northerner by birth and, if the auto industry hadn't been makin' money, I wouldn't have been born in America, if I'd a been born at all. It was due to the fact that my father was an auto worker, he was makin' money, he could support a family and it changed our society. The industry has changed our society. And now that the industry itself is changing, our society is changing also.

R: Let's try and bring it back to the plant a little more. Based on what you were just saying, how would you say that the relationships in the plant have changed? If you can give some examples, whether it's between black and white, men and women?

J: Well, women's a hard one because in our plant we have very few women. Probably one of the fewest female workforces in the country, I don't know for a fact. I would assume we have, at one time we had 11 women up until they just hired a bunch of people. Now we have 30, I think, 28. Which 28 out of 1200 people, that's, they're quite the minority, the women. So, women's not an easy one to pick in our plant. I think our women are treated pretty good, due to the fact there's so few. I mean, if it was 40/40 it might be different. But, black-white relations are a lot better today. White and European or white and Arab or black and Arab. In the plant, like the city within the city, it's different than out in the streets. Because you have to work, you have to work with these people and most people who work every day and who come in and do their job every day and they do their job with a certain amount of self-respect, people perceive that. Be it white, black, green or purple. People perceive how things are, in most cases.

And I think the race relations are good in our plant. Better than most. But the truck plant's a unique plant. I'm sure certain people always have problems, but from being from two different areas of work, the truck plant works good together. The truck plant ahh...

R: How do you know it works good together?

J: Cuz I've seen another facility, another operation.

R: Can you think of times when you walked out of the, off the line when you thought, 'Hey, it's really nice to see these folks workin' together.'? Or, 'Wow, I can't believe...'

J: Well, I don't really look at it that way. You know, there's certain things you take for granted. I think, I mean you always have your certain racists and your certain bigots. I mean, that's just human nature. You have, like goin' back with the diehard union people. Who don't, can't accept change.

R: You said before that there were two groups of folks. There were the old-time liberals that were, stood for something. Then there were other folks on the right that stood for something.

J: Well, people on the right are the people that will change, that are willing to accept the industry the way it is today. Then you have your people who, under no circumstance are they going to change from the way they, the business went when they hired in. Now the truck plant, we're talkin' about people, if you have 10 years, you're a young seniority-wise worker. Which, I fall in that category. Then you have a lot of guys who have 20 years in and they're still workin' the line. When 10 years ago, if they had 20 years in, they would be in maintenance or they would be in

pre-delivery. They would have a better job. A better job for their age group. It's hard. Like I know a lot of 55-year-old men who are absolutely bustin' their butt building trucks. Whereas, due to the changes in the industry, that wouldn't have happened years ago. The youth would have taken these jobs and the older workers would have got a more preferred job. Which is how the seniority system works, which is good. Seniority's a good thing.

But due to the fact that Ford's not hiring any new people, and they haven't for about 8 years I think, they haven't actually had a new person on payroll. Just in our local, our Local 900. I think '78 was the last year they hired anybody. So you figure that's, that's at least 8 years.

R: What's happenin' to all these other folks that aren't gettin' jobs?

J: They're workin' at McDonald's or they're goin' to school, hopefully. Or they'r joining the service. If I was 18 years old today, and if I didn't have the money for college, I would probably go into the service. And I would, I would get something that I wanted to do. People like you and myself, we, most of us fell into these jobs. I mean, how many people grow up thinkin', 'I'm gonna build trucks for my living.'? I don't think that's how, that's the mentality of the people. They just fall into a job and it pays well enough where they can set themselves up pretty nice and eventually are trapped into the system. They have to have the money to support the lifestyle that they've chosen. So they end up spending 30 or 40 years in the factory. Which I don't think is everybody's choice. I mean, some people are very

comfortable with what they do. Some people are very comfortable with doing the same job for 16 years and makin' their money and goin' home. I'm not one of those people. I want more.

R: You clearly come from an autoworker family?

J: Yeah, my dad's a, I think he's about a superintendent grade, that's not what he is. He's in charge of shipping in the corporation, which used to be Fisher Body. Been there about 35 years.

R: Where is that?

J: In Livonia, on Plymouth road. My brother and his wife
(Interruption)

R: Let's take it a step further back. You dad and mom came from where?

J: My dad's from Mississippi and my mother's from West Virginia.

R: Where'd they meet?

J: In West Virginia. My dad got out of the Navy and went to West Virginia where his brother was a minister and his other brother worked on the railroad. He started working on the railroad. And my mom...

R: What part of West Virginia?

J: Williamston. Actually, she might have lived in Kentucky. The Kentucky river which divides Kentucky and West Virginia. It's where the Hatfields and McCoys feuding, in true life, they really did.

R: Right there?

J: Yeah, in that area. He met my mom, got married and got called back in the service due to the Korean War. Came out and they had

my oldest brother and they came to Detroit in '51, I believe it was.

R: Are you related to the Hatfields and the McCoys?

J: No.

(Conversation about the Hatfields and McCoys - not transcribed)

R: So they came up?

J: Yeah. In the early '50's. I think he hired in at the Chevrolet in '51 or '52 or whatever. And now he's been at Fisher Body for years and years and years. And my mom, she's just a homemaker. She raised five of us. Three brothers and one sister.

R: And what are they doing?

J: My oldest brother's in Florida. He mangages a type of Forest City down there, it's called West Brothers. A kind of do-it-yourself type place. And my other brother, he works at Hydro-Matics. And his wife works at Hydro-matics. And my other brother is a donut maker. He works at Dunkin' Donuts. And my sister, she's only 16. She still goes to school.

R: And when you were comin' up, what was it like, when you were comin' up your dad probably was not a superintendent, right?

J: He went salaried 6 months after he, I think he was, see he went in the Navy twice so he was older than I was when I started. I'm not. I think they got married in '51 so I think he started at GM in '53, or so.

R: And you were born when?

J: In '57.

R: In '57? Okay.

J: I was the third, I'm the middle kid. The one with all the

J: I was the third, I'm the middle kid. The one with all the emotional problems, right?

R: So you're 29 now, or 30?

J: Yeah, I will be 29. I'm still a kid. I'm about as young as you can be in the auto industry.

R: That's right. You're the last, sorta the last generation of hirees.

J: I'm as young as you can be. See, I hired in in high school, like I said earlier, it worked to my advantage. Cuz, when I hired in and I was workin' all this time, makin' this money, all my friends told me I was nuts. Like that Madonna song, now, 'you're young, you need to live it up.' And at the time I kinda felt that way. But then, three years down the road, when the recession hit, I was workin' and all my friends who thought I was nuts when i was a kid, they're workin' for minimum wage and I'm makin' the big dollars in the auto industry. And now, 10 years later, a lot of my friends are still struggling and, well, it's hard to find the job.

R: Well, give me an example, paint the picture. Think of a few friends. What's Ralph doing?

J: He went to college. He got a football scholarship at Alma and then Central. And he never finished, he ended up dropping out. And he works for his dad in a restaurant. He makes probably \$20-22,000 a year. And he's got almost a degree. And I hired in at the factory, which, working the overtime and work, it's hard to get much else accomplished. I know you're aware of that. It's just an excuse, but nevertheless, it's hard to get things done

with all the overtime. But the overtime also affords you a better lifestyle. I mean, for 2 hours a day it's incredible how your lifestyle improves. For two hours a day it's just amazing. I much prefer working 10 hours five days than workin' 8 hours, 6 days. You get used to it.

R: How about 5 days, 8 hours?

J: I could live with that. But I would miss the money, you know.

R: So, how much, your buddy made \$22,000, how much did you make?

J: What do I make? If your typical worker at Ford Motor Company at Michigan Truck Plant shows up every day, he'll make almost \$40,000 a year. That's just if he shows up. I think the average, matter of fact I know the average income for hourly workers last year was \$38,600, for '85. At the Truck Plant. Which is a lot of money. Lot of money. Your CPA's, they don't make near that. Your teachers don't make near that. I mean, you got a master's you might make \$32,000 if you're in a good district. I mean, you got a good job. You're off 3 months a year, now that.

R: So okay. So you felt pretty lucky to hire in when you were just finishing high school? When you look back?

J: I didn't feel lucky. It's funny I had. Oh, yeah, when I look back, it definitely was to my advantage. But, it's funny my high school algebra teacher, he was a good friend. I was really bobbin' (Word??) there. I had algebra and three trigonometry and I was really bobbin' (???) this class. So he wasn't flunkin' me, he was givin' me D's. The only class I didn't do well in was algebra and three trig's. Other than that I did pretty good in school. He found out I hired in - I got out of this class at

semester break, but he was a good friend. And he told me, he says, I hear you went to work at Ford's. He says, 'That's the worst thing you coulda done.' I says, 'Why's that? I'm makin' as much money as most of the adults in this country, you know. I mean, guys are supportin' families on what I make.' He says, 'Yeah, but you know what your gonna do? You're gonna marry that girl from Wayne High.' No, that's not how he said it. He said, 'First, you're gonna buy yourself a new car.' He says, 'You'll marry that girl from Wayne High, you'll have yourself a couple kids and you'll be stuck in that factory for the rest of your life.' He says, 'You're too smart. You need to go to school.' I said, 'No I won't. I'm gonna work here a year, maybe two and then I'm gonna go to school.' He says, 'You won't.'

So what do I do? I bought me a new car, I married the girl from Wayne High. I bought a Chevette. My dad got it on the A-plan and I married that girl from Wayne High and within a few years I had me a coupla kids and 10 years later, I'm still at the factory. Which is, that's one of the funnier things in my life. Cuz he, he spelled it right out exactly what you would do. And that's exactly what I did.

But ahh, autoworkers affords people a good lifestyle.

R: Tell me about your lifestyle. What about the last 10 years? What did it mean?

J: Well, I always drove the car of my choice. I've basically ate what I wanted to eat. I have never...

R: What does that mean?

J: Well, I mean, if I wanted to go out to eat I always, usually

had \$20 in my pocket to do it. You know, I've never had, there's been time when I had, it's been rough. Compared to a person who makes half what I make a year. If you're the least bit frugal, or the least bit smart with your finances, working in the factories, you can, ahh, invest, you can save, you can buy property, you can live a good lifestyle. We're definitely upper middle class and we're blue collar workers. Where, the majority of blue collar workers are middle class or your Archie Bunker-type. You know, the guys who drive trucks, not trucks, buses and stuff. You know, they don't make near the money we make. Granted, they don't work this hard. I mean, we earn our money I feel, I mean, there's no free ride. I mean, it's not easy to come in here 50 hours, week after week after week.

R: What's the hardest part about coming in?

J: What's the hardest part about comin' in? I don't know, I been doin' it so long it's not really that hard anymore. It used to be gettin' up. I was on afternoons so long where your lifestyle is so easy. I mean, you get up when you want. If you don't feel like movin' you don't move. But I would trade days for that anytime. I would much rather be more disciplined. Days disciplines you. I mean, no matter what time I go to bed I get up at 5. And,

R: What do you think about drivin' to work in the morning?

J: Ahhh...

R: What do you do? When you wake up in the morning, 5 o'clock, the alarm goes off?

J: Well, usually, I turn my coffee pot on. Most times I have it set up, lotta times I don't. And, I have it all filled up, I just

gotta turn it on in the morning. I'm big enough so I can fill my thermos and have a couple cups before I leave. And, usually, I always take my shower and usually I wash my hair. Yeah, every day, otherwise I look like crud. So, I wash my hair. I don't read the paper or anything. I don't eat. I usually don't eat a breakfast. And I try to leave at 25 til and I get here just in time to punch in, get to work and it irritates my foreman. I punch in between :57 and, no between :53 and :55. 5:53 and 5:55. And ahh, I don't think about, I mean, you think about 10 hours ahead of ya. I mean, once you get the first hour in, then it's just a matter of time. You know, you did it yesterday and you're gonna do it tomorrow. You know, the mind games are over after the first month or so in the factory. Even if you have 2 weeks off or so on vacation, the first day's hard to get back, to get the groove. But once, once you get that groove in, it's not so bad. Plus, I have my newspaper to look forward to. One week out of every month, I know I'm gonna work on my newspaper.

R: You're off the line one week every month?

J: Yeah, usually. One week a month.

R: That's nice. That's pretty prestigious, pretty nice.

J: Well, it's not so much prestigious.

R: Well, it's self-esteeming.

J: Well, I find a lot of personal satisfaction, sure.

R: Well, that's what I mean.

J: I, ahh, I'll admit to that. I enjoy it. But I feel I do a good job. I try to cover all the bases. I try to make everybody feel equally important. That's why I don't ever mention salaried and

hourly, you know. There's, we got to get away from that. We got to get away from calling hourly people 'heads.' You know. 'I need four heads in this area.' That's these heads are human beings. You know, 'I need four workers' is a lot better way to describe a teammate. Somebody who is important to the system. Which we all are. And the company has come to realize that and this could be better for us, better for everybody. And that's why the people who are fighting it, they have to, they have to cuz they don't have any choice. They think they have a choice, but they don't.

R: What are their arguments in fighting it? What do they say to you, the ones that are fighting it? These liberals, the unions?

J: Suck ass. You're a suck ass. You're a, you're giving up your union identity to conform to company standards. Which, in a way, I suppose, that might be true. In a way. But I don't look at it that way. I look at it as the necessity of working and changing your conditions. Making conditions better for everybody is the bottom line and in the process you make money. In the process you get along better, you have a, I mean, it's easier to go to the hospital these days in the plant. You go to medical. I mean, your foreman, you don't see a whole lot of people, there's still a few, you don't see a whole lot of people just tryin' to screw the foreman. Just tryin' to make his life miserable. I mean, his life's basically miserable enough. The foreman is a no-win situation, you know. They're the most abused...

R: Why do you think they don't want to change things?

J: I think they're afraid of change. I think they feel they're gonna lose out in the long run.

R: What will they lose out?

J: I don't know what they think they're gonna lose out. I don't even think they do. But I know certain individuals that are anti-everything. Anti-EI. That's their right. You know, cuz they think EI takes jobs, loses jobs. And it can, it can, but it shouldn't. It doesn't have to, it doesn't have to be that way. EI is a good thing for everybody. In my opinion. The new way of doin' business is a good thing for everybody. I mean, a person who works on the line for 10 years and does, say, one job in that 10 years, he is the best. I mean, he knows his job. He is the best. And, the company has finally recognized that this man knows what he's talking about, more so than some engineer who works in Dearborn and says it's gotta be this way. And the workers say, no it's not, it doesn't work that way, it's gotta be this way. And they're giving him that. They're saying, 'Yeah, he's right. We'll take his word for it. We'll let you do it cuz it's your job. And that's better for him it makes him feel better, makes him feel like his job is important, it's not just a menial way to make money. He feels like he's contributing, therefore quality goes up, attitude goes up, therefore cooperation goes up and it makes it better for everybody.

R: Let's go back to the lifestyle that it affords you. How did the overtime affect you, how did the afternoon shift affect you, newly married and being a father.

J: I didn't like the afternoons. My wife hated it. She was afraid to be home at night all alone, every night. When you get home at 5:30 in the morning, you're gone all night. And from, what April

to September, it's daylight when you get home. I came home with the birds singin' many mornings. And so basically, you're gone all night. It's basically a midnight shift. They just get around from paying you shift premium by starting you at 6 in the evening. But basically you're working midnights. You're working swing shift. Afternoons is usually like 2:30 til 12, or something. I mean, you work the afternoon. We didn't, we worked the evening shift. And, which was ahh, if you could pull yourself together to get up at 10 o'clock every morning then it would be great for those people who could do that. I couldn't do that on afternoons.

R: So what would you do? What I'm trying to get at, what I'm trying to get at is what affect do you think the plant has had on your family life, especially with overtime. I can see clearly how it's been an economic benefit andan educational benefit and even now the benefits you have to get around and do the things you couldn't do in probably a different work situation. (PARAPHRASING OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED. SOME PARTS UNCLEAR.)

J: Overtime, in our situation, is common. It's not like all of a sudden you're working 10 hours. I mean I've worked 10 hours basically, probably, in the 10 and a half years I've been there, I think if we averaged all my 8 hour days in, it might be a year and a half of that 10 years. Tops. That's tops, if that. And that's back during the recession when we worked a week, off two weeks, you know. But basically, we've been on 10 hours, so 10 hours is a normal day for me, I mean, it's not like it's overtime. If I work 12 hours, that's overtime, which I very

rarely do. So I don't think the overtime affected it as much as the afternoon shift affected the family life. I mean, by starting at 6 in the morning and getting home by 4:30 I mean we're basically gettin' home with the nine-to-fivers. The thing is, we put our extra time in when our families were sleeping, which is advantageous, I think. That's why I like the day shift. With the day shift, I'm gone you know 3 hours before anything else is happening and those 3 hours are already spent. Now, if we were workin' til 7 or 8 in the evening, then it'd be different. Then it would really affect your family life, but I've got to where I can sleep, I can go on 4 or 5 hours of sleep a night and then, like on Saturday, I'll catch up on my sleep. So, my family life, on overtime, is, being a single parent, it's a little different.

R: Why don't you tell me about that. If you'd like to share that, how that became your situation and then, you're the third single father parent I've talked with in the last 2-3 weeks and I think it's an important development. There's a lot of developments around that. It's a new phenomenon for it to be happening.

J: It's not that new, though. Of all the fathers who go through custody across the country this is only true in 10% of the divorce cases. Only 10% of fathers actually want custody of their kids. Or, they, a lot more probably want custody but only 10% will actually go through the motions of obtaining custody and of that 10%, 6 out of 10 actually get custody. So the odds are very high if you pursue it. And it costs some money. I mean it's granted in this society that if there's a divorce, the woman gets custody of the kids. And that's a shame. Cuz nowhere in any rule

book does it say that women make better parents than men. I'd say most women probably would. Most women. But the modern era women aren't like they were, like your mother and my mother were. I mean, my mother lived for her children. I'm sure your mother probably did too. That's how they were raised. They went to school knowing that when they got out they were gonna get married, they were gonna have babies, they were gonna run the house. Nowadays, women get out of school and they want a career, you know. they want a man that's gonna be different. The Alan Alda-type, you know. The guy that understands everything. They don't want the..

R: What do you mean, the Alan Alda-type?

J: The sensitive, understanding, yeah, you-do-your-own-thing type of thing. And I wasn't raised that way. My household, when I was growing up, was the typical male-female relationship. My dad was the boss, he made the money, he came home, he was the king of his castle. All right? My mother was the doting housewife. Very good. Very good mother, did a very fine job. And it's hard to find women today that are like that. They think they have to be different, they think they have to be more. And the divorce rate and child abuse and abortion is increasing due to the fact that society has changed. I don't think it's a good change. You know, that's, then I get accused of being a male chauvinist. Which I suppose in a way I am. I believe, I believe women should work, but I believe their main priority should be the family. That's what the Bible says, you know. That's how God set things up. I believe in that. I believe that the man should take of his family

and the woman should take care of her family in her sense of what family is. And in today's society with inflation and things, that doesn't always work. And some families can hold it together. One out of two can, what they're sayin' these days, you know. And the children are the ones who suffer.

And in my particular case I decided that, once I realized that divorce was inevitable, I pursued it, I worked for a divorce, I didn't, I wasn't the one who got all the papers, I took care of all that and I wanted my kids. And I told my attorney, I said, no matter what the cost, I said, I want my kids. So he says all right, we'll go for it. And I pulled it off.

R: Was it a difficult trial?

J: Oh no, no. My wife, she was, her head's not where it should be. And, ahh, it was difficult at first, but as things went on she realized that they probably would be better off with me. And so she dropped her all her little things that she had going. They still think their mom's golden, they'd go with her tomorrow, but I guess that's typical.

R: What's been the hardest thing about being a single parent?

J: Social life. It goes back to overtime. With me being gone as much as I'm gone, it's hard for me to make the time to do things on my own, because every time I'm gone, my children are without a parent. I mean, my brother is there, and he's fine. He moved in..he's been with me about a year now.

R: How long you been single?

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J: Well, I've only been divorced for about 6 months, but I've been a single parent for, oh, probably about 14 months. But, ahh, I try to spend as much time as I can with my boys. And, well I'll admit when I'm dating a lady that I don't readily offer the information that I'm a single parent, cuz that turns off a lot of people. It doesn't really turn them off but, why would they want somebody with the problems of being a single father.

R: That's how women usually feel.

J: Yeah, exactly.

R: Yeah, don't tell me you got a kid.

J: Yeah, you know. So I don't, a lot of women are very understanding so I don't date all that much. I have a, I date, I do have a, there's one lady that I see. But, as far as, I don't mind being a single parent. I mean, I have no anticipations of getting married anytime soon. I mean, I don't foresee that at all. I suppose eventually I will. I'm not the type of person who will say I never will get married.

R: What do you like best about being a single parent?

J: What do I like best about being single? What I like best about being single is my money is my money. I make a lot of money and it's nice to be able to choose where my money goes. That's what I like best about being single. My lifestyle hasn't changed. I still have my house, I still have my furniture. I have three cars now where I had one before, now I have three.

R: Three cars? What do you do with 3 cars? The kids can't drive

'em yet.

J: No. Well, one I, my wife stole my car when she split. She took all my money. Typical horror story. She cleaned out my accounts, let my bills double, triple, let me with no money and about 3 months in hock and no car. Which was very nice thing to do. So I had to get some transportation, so I bought a '72 Chevrolet, which looks like hell but it runs real swell. And, that car got me through the winter last year, right? And then in the springtime I ran across a nice '76 Cougar that I really liked and I got a great deal on and I bought that car. So then I ended up getting my other Cougar back so I ended up with 3 cars. So now, I'm gonna get rid of the old one, but right now my brother put his car in the shop so he's using my old one and my mother's probably gonna use my new Cougar now cuz she put hers in the shop.

R: You live out near your folks, right?

J: No, they live out in Westland. They moved there when I was 7, from Livonia. No, they're still there.

R: They're supportive and helpful?

J: Oh yeah, mom and dad are great. I mean, without grandma, she's the female influence in their life, you know.

R: You said before, a couple things. One, the importance of the Bible in terms of explaining how men and women should relate in their roles in the family. And how do you see what caused the divorce - women getting careers, you said abortion as well and one other thing, I forget.

J: Well, women see things differently. I feel, I'm a firm believer in equal rights. You know, I don't believe in the Equal

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Rights Amendment. I mean, that would entail that, if it were taken to its fullest degree that there would be no men and women's bathrooms, there would be no, I mean, if Equal Rights, if the amendment were passed as it was written, there would be no difference between the sexes. I mean, men and women would be equal. The only difference was, one was a man, one was a woman. I don't believe in equal rights to that degree. I believe that a woman is as equal as any man, I believe that they're entitled to the same pay if they do the same work. I mean, I believe that this 60-40 stuff is crap and I believe in, if they choose to work they should have that opportunity. But, in doing so, it changes the household and the children are the ones that suffer. I mean, back when we were children, I mean, if you were divorced, if a woman especially was divorced, she was a divorcee and she had the big 'S' on her chest, you know. She was a, a scarlet letter you know, you didn't mess with her, she was divorced. And as society changed, it became acceptable. Well that's how the abortion rolled in. Now it's okay to kill babies. You know. Due to the fact that society has changed. I'm personally against abortion. I think abortion is a disgrace to our society. We should, under no circumstances, allow babies to be killed. I mean, it's not their fault they were conceived. You know, it's stupidity of adults. You know, I mean, how fair is it to kill a Einstein. You don't know what you're killing. You know, the greatest peacemaker in the world might have been aborted. You don't know. You know, you and I weren't aborted. I'm here because my parents. You know, we weren't aborted. And I feel that's the biggest black eye our

country has. I'm a firm believer in God. That He set society up. I'm a firm believer that America is based on the principles of the Bible. In God we trust, which is how we're based. Now, granted, people perceive that differently, which is fine, that's our basic right of freedom that we can choose to believe the way we believe. But until ahh, and I think, it's okay, women can work. And most men and women can deal with that. But, by working, it affords them the opportunity of independence where they don't per se need the man like they did, say, a generation ago. World War II was what changed that when they took all of our young men, I think it was on the average 6 million men a year were over in Europe every, for four years. Six million of 'em. And those were all the prime-of-lifers, you know. The 20-40 working men were over in Europe. So they had to, the war industry was incredible and they had to hire people and they didn't hire blacks. I mean, they wouldn't hire blacks, so they hired women. And that and lot of men came back and they got divorced. The divorce rate was incredible after World War II. The women had developed a certain sense of independence. They realized, 'Hey, I can get out here and work too' where for years they didn't think they could. Then they realized that they could.

R: Plus a whole lot of people got married just because the guy was going overseas. They didn't even know each other.

J: Yeah, that happened too. That was very much a phenomenon at the time. But, see that opened up different avenues. And then your media is pushing sex so heavily that people have changed from sex being making love to sex being an act of independence or

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whatever you want to call it. It's not what it was meant to be, I don't think. I mean, sex is not threesomes and toys and like, people perceive it today. That's not the idea, you know. I mean, dogs don't do it that way. Dogs might. But basically, most of your species, they have one mate, you know. They, you know, your penguins and your birds, you know, they keep one mate their whole life. That's how things were set up. And us being the smarter species, we can perceive things the way we want and it's ruined a lot of people. The society has ruined a lot of people. And media has a lot to do with that. Television. Movies.

R: Did you have these beliefs when you were comin' up through high school? Let's see, you were born in '57, and '67, '75 you were 15, 16. I mean these were some of the current events issues you had in junior high, high school as well. Who were your heroes when you were comin' up in high school?

J: Good question. I always admired my father. I mean, he's the type of man, he had all of his teeth pulled and he didn't miss a day's work. I mean, I get my work ethic from my father. He went you know 15 years in a row and missed 2 days. I mean, he worked and he instilled that in us. You get a job and you work. And I been workin' since I was 12 years old. I started gettin' jobs in junior high, went on to restaurants and then came to Ford's when I was 18. And I betcha, I don't have an AWOL on my record in 10 years. I've took time off. I've used my personal days. I believe that's our duty as UAW people to use up all of our time. I don't, this pay in lieu is garbage, I think. I think people should take their time off. That gives jobs, that creates jobs. The PPH day,

that was a good thing, it created jobs. These guys who take their pay in lieu, I don't think that's right, I don't think they should have that opportunity. They should take the time cuz that assures that there's gonna be X amount of jobs. People don't see it that way, but that's how I see it.

Who was my heroes? I don't know, when I was a teenager, that was in the Nixon administration, you know. He was definitely no hero, you know.

R: You didn't respect him? Well a hero is different from someone you respect.

J: And I never did really fantasize about sports figures. I always wished I could play pros, you know. I always had the drive but didn't really have the ability. I mean, if I had as much ability as I had desire, I'd a been the best. It just didn't work that way. And, heroes? I think, Jimmy Swaggert was a hero of mine.

R: I don't... tell me about him.

J: He's an evangelist. He's a guy who just preaches from the Bible. He's just hellfire and brimstone. Tells it like it is. He's not afraid to name names in Congress who are the real liberals in our society. See I'm basically a conservative. Basically I believe that Ronald Reagan is doing a fairly decent job, even though people are hurting from it. He is putting our country back on the right course, in my opinion. And evidently, most of the country feels the same way. I mean, and people are hurting because of it, but basically, he's a firm believer in family and defense and morals, which is what our country was

founded on. We were founded on being a moralistic, free society. And like, I'm against losing our rights. Like I'm against these random drug tests. I think that's, that's my right. It's my right to my body. I mean, I don't do drugs and I don't feel I should have to prove to anybody that I don't do drugs. I'm an innocent man. I'm not guilty until I prove myself innocent. That's not how our society is set up. And all these people who are pushing it, I feel that, it's like somebody comes to your door, a cop comes to your door and says he wants to search your house without a warrant, he can't do that. But now they're saying they want to come to your body, they want to search your body, which is the only thing that you have which is yours. I mean, you might own a car but if somebody hit that car, it's not yours anymore, it's gone, you know. You might have a house but if the house burns down. But the body is the only thing that is yours. And now they're saying that they're gonna, they're wanting to make it mandatory. I just, I disagree with that.

R: I'll give you an analogy. Your body is yours, it's yours you should have control over it, determine what happens to it, to take care of it. It's your freedom, your right, your responsibility. But if you take drugs, and you impregnate a woman and that baby is a junkie, the baby's on a coke trip. And that woman, that woman says, 'It's my body.'

J: That's a good example. But, the way I was saying it Rich was, I don't do drugs. I take nicotine, you know, I smoke. I drink a beer every now and then. As far as the cocaine, the marijuana, I don't do that. And I don't feel I should have to prove to anybody

that I don't do that. My job is not so important to society that I'm gonna hurt somebody if I'm under the influence of drugs anyway. I mean, I might hurt the quality of the truck. But, I don't do 'em anyways so why should I have to prove that I don't do that. I mean, that's not, we are basically innocent. I mean, a guy could go out and kill somebody and be caught dead nuts. And by law, he's innocent until proven guilty. And even though there might be a thousand witnesses, by law he's innocent. I mean, that's one of the basic principles of our society. You gotta be proven guilty in our judicial system, which has its own set of flaws. And now they're talking, like for instance, this pornography commission. Their saying what's right. I believe that pornography is terrible, I believe it should be constricted or restricted or whatever. But I feel it should be available cuz there's certain, this is a free society. If people want to view that type of material they have the right to do that. And for pressure groups that tell 7-11 that, if you don't stop selling these things we're gonna stop, I don't think that's right. I mean, what's gonna keep a tobacco pressure group from saying the same thing to several others. If you don't stop selling cigarets, you know, we're gonna stop...You know, that's not what free enterprise is all about. That's not what a free society, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, that's ahhh..

R: Is this what Jimmy Swaggert says?

J: No, he's just a, he's just not afraid to tell it like it is. I mean, there's a lot of your, they call 'em TV preachers, right?

R: Like Pat Robertson who's running for president.

J: Yeah, like, I don't think that would be good. Pat Robertson, I don't really follow him that much. I'm sure he's probably a good Christian man. I'm sure he's a good, God-fearing Bible-believing man. And I have no doubts. But I don't think, at least right now, I don't think that's what this country needs for president. Due to the fact that not everybody believes the way Pat Robertson does. I mean, Ronald Reagan, he's the type of person that, he believes in God and very moralistic, but he's also, doesn't, he's not a minister, he doesn't do that for a job. He doesn't, his purpose in life is not to win souls for heaven, so to speak. Where Pat Robertson, you mix church, not so much church, church is such a tangible world. You mix religion, a certain religion with politics and you're gonna have problems because there's a lot of people who don't believe in that religion. It's like a Mormon president, it wouldn't work. I mean, if he's trying to make everybody Mormon, it just wouldn't work. And Pat Robertson, while he may be a great man, he might be an excellent president, but I don't think going into it that I would vote for Pat Robertson.

R: What do you think in the plant, in your general thinking, do you think what you're talking about, world affairs, strong defense, family, Ronald Reagan. You get around.

J: I don't really talk politics or religion. I'm smarter than that. I think the basic consensus among most Americans, at least it should be, ideally it should be, that we are America. And we are a very unique society. And we are unique because of the

freedoms that we afford each other. I mean, you can do what you want and I can do what I want and as long as we don't step on each other, we can get along together, we can do it together. I mean, you could believe in capital punishment and I could not but as long as we can agree to disagree. That's how our society is set up. We're a free society. If I want to walk the street at 3 o'clock in the morning, I can. In Russia, you can't. People take for granted their freedoms. They take it for granted cuz we're born here. Now you take a guy that's come here from an Arab country or Europe and he sees our society for what it is. Well, we take it for granted. And they, they jump on it. Well, they get tax credits too, but they see the land opportunity. While we see, we grow up, we get jobs and make good money, we don't necessarily see the opportunities that abound, you know. Because we're comfortable, we have a good lifestyle, our kids go to good schools, we have nice clothes, we have a dependable car.

R: What do you think's gonna happen, people, I don't want, I want to know what you think in relating to your experience or how you look at the way other people think.

J: In the factory?

R: Yeah. Or what do you think of Bill Lucas running for governor? The Black Republican.

J: I think Bill Lucas is gonna have a rough way to go. Blanchard, although I don't agree with Blanchard, the man has performed, he has turned the state around. We did go from a billion and a half deficit to where we have a surplus now. Which is quite incredible. He made some tough decisions. He raised taxes, he

almost, they were trying to impeach him because of all the things he did. But, nevertheless, he had enough foresight to see. I didn't vote for Blanchard, I voted for Headlee. Although I didn't, at the time I felt he was the best of two evils. I don't like Blanchard because of his religious beliefs, I mean, he's a unitarian. He doesn't believe in Christ, or Divine Being, he's a humanist. Which is, they believe in humans. The Bible talks about people like that in the Latter Days.

Bill Lucas, I think, I don't think he'll do it. And it's not fair. Him being black, I don't think it'll be an issue. I don't think that will be an issue. I don't think any Republican is gonna beat Blanchard at this time because of Blanchard's record. But I don't think his color is an issue.

R: What do you think based on developments in Central America?

J: I'm a hawk. I believe we should go down there and make a democracy out of Central America.

R: Whether they want it or not?

J: No, you can't be that naive. I think you have to go down there and show them. I mean, it's funny, the way our society perceives things. We can sit back and let Russia, through their puppets, through Cuba and through other areas, take over countries, whether the people want it or not and nobody wants to do anything about it. But let America try to do the same thing, and we're the pigs, we're the ones who want to force our society down their throats. Which if we don't, Russia will. So it becomes a, what's the lesser of two evils. I mean, do you want communism in Mexico, which it would eventually spread to? Do you want Mexico to be

communist? Do you want Russia to have a satellite right in our back door? I don't. I mean, I think it's terrible that Kennedy let Cuba go. I mean, if I'd been president or if Ronald Reagan had been president back in '61 in the Bay of Pigs, if it didn't work, he'd a went again. There's no reason why Cuba should be communist. It just shouldn't happen.

R: Do you think these countries become communist because of what Russia does, not because of something that happened before or that they're sick and tired of being controlled by, I mean the U.S. had the Marines in Nicaragua for 20 years, the Nicaraguans threw 'em out. I just want to push it a little more and then I want to talk.

J: Yeah, well, we're interpreted as being a forceful type of people, but you know that if you work at our society, our society works. I mean, we have problems. We have crime and we have poverty, but that's just man's inhumanity to man. I mean, man doesn't always do things the way they should be done. But I honestly feel that democracy is the best way to live, especially in these times. If a country is free, but you gotta think that third world countries, they aren't as advanced. And our society works better because we've had 200 years to advance our cause. And, when it comes down to them being forced into a type of democracy or being communist, I'm in favor of forcing them into democracy. I think, in the long run, we would benefit from it and they would too. It might take them a generation to understand. Like the Phillipines, you know. See, you have a lot of communist pressure. See, Russia loves to stir trouble up. Russia is a,

their goal is world domination and a lot of Americans don't believe that. But the goal of Russia, the Russian people are starving because they're spending all their money on defense. They don't care about humans, they don't care. They care about government.

R: Do you think if you went into Detroit and I showed you a food line that you wouldn't hear the same thing?

J: Yeah, that's what I'm saying, see. Different people interpret things. But I honestly believe, see I told you I was opinionated. I honestly believe that people who are in poverty lines, don't have to be there. I mean, this is a land of opportunity. Like, if they don't want to be on welfare, they won't.

R: Explain to me, being an autoworker, who knows that you're the last, people comin' up after you haven't been hired into the auto plants, right? Which was a way out and a way in.

J: That'll change, though.

R: You think that'll change?

J: They'll have to open up. Eventually, they'll have to hire again. But they're hurting themselves right now because there's no youth. But eventually, I mean, there's always gonna be X amount of autoworkers.

R: But a lot less?

J: A lot less.

R: I mean, it used to be in '68, anyone who wanted to work in the auto plants could work at GM for four months, quit, work at Chrysler for four months, go back to the same old GM plant, right? If they wanted a break.

J: Yeah.

R: That's not an opportunity that exists. The opportunities are somewhat, everybody, there's not even enough Burger King jobs and McDonald's has more people working now than GM.

J: Burger King and McDonald's is not the answer.

R: So you're saying that, I was just trying to get from your experience, you know that they're not coming in, it's not like Ford is looking for autoworkers and then there's these people on the food lines hanging out just waiting for their welfare check. You know that's not...

J: You go to Detroit, you said you live in Detroit. Society in Detroit is a shame. You have a lot of single mothers, you have a lot of teenagers. It goes back to gun control. They say control guns, keep your kids alive. Well, I think that's a copout. You have a society where, in certain cities, the industry came in the '40's and '50's and then, as people became more affluent. I'm not talking about affluent society, but as people became more affluent, they were able to branch out and move to the suburbs. And it was basically a white, because as blacks moved in, back in our prejudiced times, which was very recent. You know, Martin Luther King was killed in '68 and the irons were in the fire then. So in my lifetime I've seen blacks become equal. I mean, it doesn't bother me at all to have a black person as my neighbor. Now, 20 years ago, it would have bothered my father tremendously. And he's not really a bigot, that's just the way society was.

In Detroit, you have a lot of problems that are built into the system. One thing, you have a mayor who, a mayor who cares

about south of Jefferson avenue and he could care less about the neighborhoods. That's apparent. And he's got enough, I mean he can pull off these sludge contracts and come out smellin' like a rose when I know for a fact, I don't know for a fact, but in my gut I know that he had a lot to do with that. And he's a politician plus, and it works for him. And, yeah, you're gonna have problems. Poverty and crime is a problem, but it's not something... (INTERRUPTION IN TAPE)

The welfare system is good, Rich, for the people that need it but not everybody who's on it needs it. I mean, I feel that for welfare, there's a lot of things that could be done to give these people some self respect. Go ahead and give 'em their welfare check, put 'em to work. Let them clean the streets, let them clean the parks, let them cut the grass. Give them some self-esteem. Then they'll have the ambition. When you have a lot of third and fourth generation welfare families. There's no reason for that. There's no reason why people should sit back and not do anything and live in poverty and live with the cockroaches. It doesn't have to be that way. If you believe in the free enterprise, capitalist system, that's how people should think. This is granted my opinions.

R: I agree, I agree. These are your opinions, no doubt about it.

J: I could very easily quit my job and go welfare. I could do that. I mean, that's an option that I have as an American. Would I do that? No.

R: You'd get cut back to \$300 a month.

J: If I lost my job tomorrow, I mean, I might be on unemployment

until I found a job, but this guy wants to work. I mean, I'm not gonna sit on my butt.

R: And you think most folks sit on their butt, in the city?

J: Oh, no, no. Lot of people are trapped. No Rich, I think you're misinterpreting what I said. I realize there's a lot of people that need welfare, they need help. I realize that. I mean, you have a lot of women where the daddy takes off on 'em, they get involved with drugs, alcohol and they become a total zombie.

There's always that, there's always that element in any type of society.

R: Well, I welfare system doesn't work either.

J: The way it's working, it doesn't work.

R: Let me ask a question. You said in the very beginning - we're almost through, we're wrapping it up, - you said in the beginning, that this is not, 1986 you don't have the sort of average view of the autoworker as you thought they were in the '40's or '50's. And, you read alot, you mind your own business. And, what kind of things do you read or your other interests. And, tell me something about that.

J: I'm very much a follower of world affairs. I'm very much politically minded. I have aspirations of getting into politics one day, I would like that. I would like to be the mayor of my city. Not so much Ypsilanti, but, I would like to, that's kind of like a fantasy. It's something that I would like to do. I like to watch sports, college and professional sports. I like baseball, baseball's a real...

R: Where do you get your information on world affairs?

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J: Well, I get Time magazine. I have for about 8,9 years. And I read newspapers. I'm very much a reader, I'm always reading. And I read the Free Press basically everyday and the News, usually. If I'm working on the line, I'll read the Free Press and the News all day. I mean, if I can read, I can do my job. And I'll read the editorial, I like the editorial pages. And I don't always agree, but I like the idea we all have our own opinions. But I find that fascinating. In a society like we have, we can all agree to disagree because that's the foundation of our belief as Americans.

I like to, I read Iacocca's book recently and I was very impressed. I don't agree with his philosophy of government. I think he leans toward socialism, in fact, and I don't agree with that. I don't agree with socialism. I believe in free enterprise, I believe in capitalism. I'm a capitalist at heart. I mean, if I was rich, I'd be happy, you know.

R: What's the most important thing when you say you believe in capitalism? What does that mean? And then, what is your concern, what sometimes upsets you about capitalism?

J: I believe in capitalism because it affords everybody an equal opportunity to succeed. No matter what they choose to succeed in, be it a flower shop, a garage where they fix cars. Everybody has the opportunity to start a business without government intervention. Other than controls, like the auto industry has certain amount of regulations they have to follow. But the majority of businesses in this country, you have total freedom as to how you run your business. Whether it's selling Amway or

selling flowers on the street. You have free enterprise, you can do what you want to do. That is a right that is unheard-of in the majority of the world. No government intervention. I disagree with the government controlling anything. I think our government is by the people, for the people. It's not to the people, it's of us, it's an extension of our freedom is our government. Granted our government, there's certain functions which they have to perform, which one is providing defense, another is providing a school system, which is good. I think public schools are being wasted and I think that's due to the parents' fault, I think that's due to the family breakdown. There's no, one thing I try to do with my boys, they know school is their number one priority, as long as they're in my house. I mean, I am putting money a way, I buy Savings Bonds, just for college. I have no intention of cashing these bonds, I figure I can save, two or three thousand dollars a year just to send my boys to school. And I'm hoping that, by the time they get to that age that that is what they will want to do. I'm hoping I don't have to force them into something they don't want to do. But I want them to do what I didn't do. It's not living my life through my boys. I just want them to not end up in a factory. I want them to be able to, my oldest son wants to be an artist, I mean he's very good. He's talented, plus. And that's what he wants to be. And I honestly feel, he's one of those people that at 9 years old, he knows what he wants to do. There are people like that. And this one here, I don't know what he's gonna do.

But, I think the capitalist society, where it breaks down is

foreign trade breaks down capitalism. But, then again, it goes hand-in-hand, you know. In a free enterprise system, Americans should have the option of buying what they want to buy. I mean, that should be an option. And so then you have your checks and balances. That's where I contradict myself. I believe it'd be great if we stopped foreign imports. Or if we, what I don't understand about trade with Japan, we sold 2 Escorts in Japan in 1984. Maybe 7 or 8 Lincolns. And yet, they sold, what, 3 million, 4 million cars here.

R: They make all their profits here. They don't make any money in Japan.

J: Yeah, right. They make it all here. And that's not right. That might be free enterprise, but it's only free to the Japanese, not free to us. It cost us, we pay a price for that.

R: Yeah, except we made a fortune for 30 years. We made a fortune off of 30 years of investing in Japan. Now it's just coming home.

J: Yeah, I wrote a story about that that's coming out in the next paper you'll get. I wrote a story about America's views towards Japanese. I have a lot of opinions about a lot of different things.

R: All right, let me just...just one last question. What do you think would be the biggest change that could take place in the plant in the next 3 years that would advance the EI program?

J: More participation from lower management. I mean, I think the upper management are definitely committed to EI. I think it's a matter of being mandated from the company. I mean, EI is going to work and upper management, the higher-ups, you know, the

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operating committee are going to work with EI. And until it gets down to the supervisors on the line, on the whole, not just one or two but on the whole, until they can appreciate the EI like the hourly people can, that's, that'll be the biggest change in EI.

R: Do you think most hourly people appreciate it now?

J: No, uh, uh. Most hourly I think. I think most people could care less, one way or the other. Then I have, then I think there's a number of people who are very much for it. Then's there's always a number of people that are very much against it. They see it as a downplaying of their UAW rights. Which to some degree I can see where they would see that. But I think it's because they don't understand what EI is all about. They see it as being a company propaganda-type of program. But, I don't understand that way of thinking because we are the company, just like we are the country. Well, we are Ford Motor Company. I mean, Mr. Polene and Mr. Peterson, they're just the guys who are just the figureheads. They make the money, they make the big money, but nevertheless, we are the company. We are the people that determines whether profits are made by the cars that we built. And until the lower management realizes that the hourly people are the, is the company.

R: So you would almost see that the EI program and the elimination of the antagonistic relationship between the union and the company as almost the right of the workers to have a vote.

J: Yeah.

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R: It's almost like we're no longer us vs. them. We'r all Americans, all fighting for the American auto industry to survive.

J: Exactly.

R: And, the, what's good for GM is good for America, what's good for, GM. I'm gonna try it and you tell me what you want. What's good for GM and Ford is good for America for those of us who are working for them and that's really the best thing that could be happening in the country at this time. To be fighting over that is just ridiculous.

J: Uhh, right. One thing I disagree with. I work for Ford Motor Company, but basically, I work for myself. See, I work to make money. I don't go to Ford for a social activities. I go there because I decided that I need X amount of dollars to survive. And I can make them at Ford's. And Ford Motor Company is my vehicle to pay my bills, which is fine, which is how it works in this country of multi-people. What's good for GM is good for the country? To a degree that's true because GM is such a big country and it affects so many people. And, well GM, other than the government, it's one of the highest, now you said McDonald's is ahead of them, is one of the highest employed people. And if you consider all of the outlets, all of the small shops that contribute to GM, you're talking millions of people who are being affected by what General Motors does. So, to a degree, what's good for GM is good for a lot of Americans. I don't know if it's good for the country as a whole, but, it's good for a lot of Americans. And until American autoworkers decide that we are the

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industry, us and management together, we are the industry. You know, we have to, we're gonna make it or break it. And if we want to retire and keep our pensions, we can't depend on Social Security. I mean, Social Security is so abused and so, the way it's set up it just doesn't work anymore. Cuz if they didn't, they didn't depend when it was set up that eventually there would be more older folks than younger folks, I mean, as health gets better every year and over decades, I mean. I'm 28, I probably got 40 years before I start thinking about Social Security. What's going to happen to Social Security in 40 years? So I feel it's up to me to prepare for old age. Which you might have to do that. You're not guaranteed old age but you have to think about it. You have to think about tomorrow even though you can't know you'll live tomorrow.

R: What do you think you'll do if you retire from the plant?

J: I plan on, I'll be 48 when I have 30 years in and my goal is to be set up that I can walk out of here when I'm 48 and start my own business or already be into my own business. Now what it is, I don't know. I want to write, I want to be a writer. I want to be able to write. I want to be able to write books. My goal, if I had money, if I ever have the opportunity where I have enough money to do it, I'm gonna buy me a newspaper. Be it Associated Press or maybe a smaller one. But I would love to be able to put out a publication daily with some of my editorials in there. That might be a little selfish, I don't know. But somebody's got to have a newspaper.