

DON MUSHINSKI

D: I hired in at Michigan Truck Plant in 1964 just when it was started, although that plant was a station wagon plant prior to that. They closed it down and then they reconverted it for manufacturing trucks.

R: How long had it been a station wagon plant?

D: Uh, I think, when they first left Livernois and Warren, when they were with Lincoln-Mercury, they switched over to an assembly and then they also built a station wagon plant. Now how long they ran it, I don't really know. I would be speculating if I said 3-5 years.

R: So it's a post-war plant? '50's?

D: Yeah, it is.

R: They stayed at Livernois til the mid '50's-early '60?

D: Yeah. I think the, probably the early part of '54, something like that, that they moved from the, the Lincoln-Mercury division moved, well the Mercury division moved to Wayne Assembly and the Lincoln division moved out to Wixom. We're an offshoot from, actually from Wayne Assembly.

But, when I first hired in down there, I hired in in '64 like I said. I had a job at Burroughs.

R: What were you doing?

D: At Burroughs? I had several jobs. My last capacity was a printed circuit process man. A silkscreener? Well, I would silkscreen circuitry boards. They were like etched in ink and the circuit board now has probably become and obsolete in a sense

now, because of the micro chips. But it's, at that time it's an oversized micro-chip. What you call micro-chips now. But anyways. A very good job. That was my last position.

But they were running, they were running into several readjustments, layoffs and so forth like that. And I think '64, I had been laid off from Burroughs and I had all anticipations to go back there. My brother convinced me to go look for another job because in his capacity, he was a general foreman at Wayne Assembly then. And he said the opportunities are probably better there.

Well, I had never intended to want to work in a factory, an automobile factory. I worked since I was a kid, 18, prior to the Korean War, and I knew what assembly plants were like, you know?

R: What made you want to stay away from it?

D: Well, the pace that they work. I mean, they have a pace that never stops. I mean, prior to when I hired in, when I was 18 working in a factory, they didn't have so much liberty that they have now.

R: Where'd you hire in, what was it like, when you were 18?

D: I worked at several. I worked at Dodge Main, which is closed now. I worked at the Clark Plant, the Cadillac Plant, which they're gonna close now. All old plants, you know. And the one at Dodge Main was good cuz I worked in the stock department. I worked on the dock. And it was a nice, good job. There wasn't regimented work production. I just, whatever came in I'd load and unload, stuff like that. At Cadillac, at Clark Street, I started there, I started off with the same similar job. I always seemed

to put in for stock work cuz I was familiar with it. Friends of mine I knew worked on assembly, man. I'd watch 'em. Boom, you know.

R: No, I don't know. What's it like, 'hey let's stay in stock, rather than assembly line'?

D: Well, I did that cuz you could see the motion, the motion. It continues to kept goin', I mean. Probably not as rough as it is now. But at that time the motion of not being able to move off of your job and go somewhere, that you had to be there all the time and do that job, was something that I didn't like. I like to work. I like to do it at my leisure. I mean, pace myself at my work. And, the one really assembly job I ever had was at Cadillac but it was my fault cuz I hired in first on a nice stock job and it wasn't bad. I had a lot of leisure time. But because I was isolated from everybody, I wanted to get back in the main part of the plant, well I says, I wanted a transfer. (LAUGH) This is funny because they accommodated me. They, I only had about 5 days seniority. They accommodated me, put me on assembly line. So guys breaking me in for the job for about three days. And I think the lines are not as fast as they are now. But for somebody that never worked on an assembly line, they're fast.

So, for about 3 days they got somebody breaking me in on the job and finally, they cut me loose. And the minute they cut me loose, I went in the hole. Are you familiar with the hole? What I mean is, you just run with the job, all the way down. You gotta keep running back to get your stock. I went down and, oh, I couldn't come up. I said this is it. I left, I told the boss, I

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says, I couldn't do this. You gotta get me another job. He says, that's the best one we could job. I said, if that's the case, well I'm leaving.

I remember that, I was only 18 or 19.

R: What year was this?

D: It had to be about 1951 or '52.

R: Before the Korean War?

D: Yeah. Well, the Korean War started in 1950, so it was just about then. So I say, like, a young guy, I said, heck, I can find another job someplace else. Cuz jobs were pretty plentiful then. If you wanted to look, most of them were manual labor, you worked at the shops, they're much different than they are now. You could go to any one of the Big Three at that time, or the Big Four which is AMC. And, put in an application and if things are lookin' good, you'd probably get a call.

R: You were raised here in the Detroit area?

D: Uh, uh.

R: Your dad was involved in the auto industry?

D: Oh, my dad, yeah. My dad came here from Texas in, geez, the '30's, early '30's. Probably late '20's. And he comes from the rough life. His life down there in Texas was sharecroppin'. I think he came here when he was about 18 years old and he was born in 1906. So, he knew, he knew what hardships were. He worked down there in Houston for awhile.

R: What kind of work, after he gave up sharecropping?

D: Well, sharecropping is where some property, big land owner

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gives a people, or person, some land to work and you share whatever you grow for him and he gets the other half. And he probably provides for you living quarters down there, you and your family. At that time, that was probably the only means of survival for those people, down there. But, he was young and, he left that kind of life. Like I said Houston, he worked down there for awhile. In fact, he worked for Howard Hughes, he had a plant down there, in Houston, some nice small shop. I don't remember all the details. He worked there for awhile and then he moved up to Michigan here.

R: Why did he come to Michigan?

D: Uh, probably word of mouth that Michigan was the industrial hub of the nation and, uh, jobs were probably plentiful, pay was probably better than anyplace else. And, I guess, when he first come here he did work, he tells me he worked for Kroger's. Kroger's had been here for, I don't know how long. And, he was tellin' me he knew Jimmy Hoffa from first organizing days in the union. And he called him a very rough, very rough person, you know. An organizer. Really adamant in his union ways.

After that, somehow, where else did he wind up? Oh, he worked at a place called Grant-Page. They're out of existence now, they used to make cars. And then finally, oh, I don't know if it was in the early '30's, late '30's, he got a job I think for Lincoln-Mercury.

Oh, I gotta tell you a funny thing. I have to laugh at this every time. I think in the '30's, late '30's, he had a job page 6

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already, I think working for Grant-Page at that time. Now, his brother came here and visited him from Texas, Fort Worth, too. And his brother, his brother looked similar to him but he's younger. So they went down, now this was in the late '30's now, they went down to Rouge town, maybe '39, '40, they went down to the Rouge and they waited all night in line there for a job. He wanted to get his brother a job down there. Well, the way they operated hiring policies then was, the plant guard would come out to the gate and holler, "Hey, you, you, you, and you." Just pick people. Whoever he happened to pick, he'd let 'em in, they'd let 'em get a short interview and put 'em to work.

R: That night? They'd put 'em right to work?

D: They'd put 'em to work right away. Even if the guy stayed out there all night. So that's what happened to my dad. He was there trying to get his brother a job and the plant guard come out and happened to pick him, not his brother. So, he walked in down there and he didn't know what the hell to say, that he had a job, he was just waiting there for his brother. So he kept quiet, they interviewed him and gave him the job. They were going to put him to work right away.

So he stood there silently. So finally, after, I don't know if they did physicals then or not, I don't remember. So they put him to work and he worked a couple of hours. And then, at that time, he told me, when he was in the shop down there, you know, you couldn't do nothing. You had to raise your hand all the time. They had no union, you know.

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R: What do you mean, raise your hand?

D: Well, if you wanted to talk to the foreman, or something, while you were doing your job. The job was a job and you had no time to talk or nothing, just work. And, so the foreman came over to him and he says, "Look, I been standin' out there all night long. Didn't have no sleep, didn't eat nothin'. I'd like to go home and eat and come back tomorrow." So the foreman at that time said, "Ok, go on home." So, as he left, he says, he didn't know how the heck he was gonna do this and come back to work cuz he had another job. So, what he did was send his brother down there in his place. And they never knew the difference. At that time, they didn't pay by checks, you got paid in an envelope, whatever the pay was. Cash, yeah. And his brother worked in his place for about 6 or 8 months and then he went back to Texas. So you see how funny, no records, nothing.

R: They just wanted a body to move that line?

D: Yeah, just a body to move that line. But, in the early part, he used to tell me, they used to have gangplanks on top of the lines. You know, when he finally went to work for Ford's, after a stint at Grant-Page, uh, the foreman walked on the gangplank on the top of the assembly line and he'd just holler at people, "Hey, you get this done. Hey, you get that done," you know. "You're not workin' fast enough," stuff to that effect. And, if you had to get to the bathroom, you had to raise your hand up, the guy would say, "okay, go now. You better go to the bathroom." They didn't have no doors then on the bathroom. So if you went to

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the bathroom and that guy happened to follow you, the supervisor or something, and he'd watch you. And if you didn't have nothin' in that toilet, you're fired, you know. This is how...

R: This is all before the union?

D: This is all before the union, uh, uh. So, I don't know when they started organizing, he was, I guess at his age, he was pretty active. He liked to watch boxing, at that time boxing was the thing, you know. He was involved in a little amateur boxing. So he became a little radical when organizing the union came up. And, when they were first organizing the union for, I think, the Ford Motor Company, his activity got him fired.

R: What happened? What do you mean by radical?

D: Uh, well, he believed that the union was trying to present for people. At that time, they had a lot of people working there runnin' scared, you know. You couldn't accomplish nothin'. Uh, and his position was, he was involved in all kinds of things, union meetings. I don't think they had halls at that time or not. They used to meet at certain places, you know, stuff like that. So his activity, as far as I know, what he told me, is that the union wasn't recognized then, you know. So his activity for trying to organize the union in the shop, and outside the shop, caused him to be fired. Now he was fired for 2 years. Not only him, several other leaders of the union so that when the union came back and was recognized as a bargaining agent for the workers, he was reinstated.

R: So he was one of the demands to get, to recognize the union,

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they would hire the people that were fired for their union activity?

D: Yeah. And he's telling me they ran, they used to run a lot of kangaroo courts. He used to belong to the flying squad, which was the original flying squad.

R: What did that mean, kangaroo court? From what he told you.

D: What that consisted of was people that used to go in the plant. Let me get back a little bit. There's a lot of people that work that are afraid to take a position and some beliefs. For whatever reason, I mean, afraid their family knowing, (unintelligible), so they just string along. They're not actual leaders in getting something done. So you can understand that some of these people didn't want to take any position. They'd keep goin' to work under those conditions regardless, you know. And there was others, I would say, like pathfinders, that, uh, envisioned that, this isn't the way to work. Uh, so a lot of these people when they pulled a strike out on Ford's, a lot of these people, Ford's started it and in other parts of the country, so what they did was lock them in. I don't remember much problem, or if they had much problem, they didn't, no they didn't run it at the Lincoln-Mercury division at that time. It was at Rouge where they were still running then. So what they did was, they locked those people in.

R: Who locked who in?

D: The union.

R: The union locked the people in?

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D: Yeah, they wouldn't let those people out.

R: The union wouldn't let the people out of the plant?

D: No. So they were forced to stay in there cuz they set up pickets all around the whole damn complex, the Rouge complex. If you're familiar with the Rouge complex, how big it is? And, they were there 24-hours a day. And any time they visited...

R: This was in '41?

D: Was that the time? '41? Prior to World War II, anyways. So now and then when some of the guys had had enough of it in the plants, and try to get out, some of them swim across the rivers they got over there, some of however tried to sneak out. The union guys would catch 'em. They weren't recognized as the union then, but these people would catch 'em and they'd take them to some, what I call kangaroo court and what he said, but they'd sit in at the court with all these, what they call flying squadrons like troop protection group, something like that, and at several of these was Walter Reuther, you know. And they didn't bodily harm anybody but they'd just give 'em a warning, they'd tell 'em, look, what direction, what they were tryin' to accomplish, to educate them in the sense that why, what they're doing is wrong, but what the union was trying to project, you see. And, (unintelligible) kinds of discipline, and he taught me things like that.

R: You were raised with these kinds of stories, you were raised with this kind of image of what it meant to work in the plant as well as the importance of the union? That was in your soul, that

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was in your blood?

D: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I was raised with that thought that, I never lost that thought, that working in a shop is a company's blessing, I mean. I think what we have is made through the unions, and I firmly believe that. Back to him and I'm tellin' you about my dad. Back to him, uh, he got reinstated when the union was recognized. He became sergeant at arms, a guide for the local 900.

R: 600.

D: No, it was 900 then.

R: Oh, he got rehired and then got transferred to...

D: Then he was working at Lincoln-Mercury.

R: Did he go back to the Rouge?

D: He never was working there. I guess whatever records they had was under his brother's name, or something. He was working, like I say, when he had the job, he had a job at Grant-Page. Then he got a job, all this was happening while he had a job at Lincoln-Mercury, on Livernois and Warren.

R: So he didn't have to work at the Rouge to try to organize the Rouge?

D: No.

R: You could come from any UAW or any industry, auto plant, to come?

D: And, ahh, when they first organized their local 900, an affiliate of local 600, he chartered that, he's a charter member of that, his signature's on there with the rest of the crew. ~~page~~

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Walter Reuther, (unintelligible). And I used to go, when I was a kid, he used to take us to some of these union picnics, they'd have, not so many picnics, I remember. Christmas things they'd have. See those old time guys. They weren't old, well to me they were older cuz I was younger. But, see these union activists there. At that time they didn't impress you that much because you didn't know what kind of legacy they were gonna leave, but they did leave a big legacy for unionism.

R: What do you remember from going to those parties? Did your whole family go? Did your mom go and your brothers?

D: I don't know if my mom went. I think my brother, me and my, my older brother, I think both of us went. What I remember was just a Christmas show and a presentation of maybe a little box of candy, or something, you know. Things were different, quite a bit different than they are now.

R: What are you thinking about when you say that?

D: Well, now, material things are gauged on the value of it rather than, then, anything that was given was acceptable and cherished. Probably still is with kids. I mean, kids don't put no value on it, but grownups do, you know. Let me take a break.

About my dad, uh. He's accomplished a lot of good. But he got to that point in his life, as the years go on, that his activity in the union, just, you know, he lost interest in it. Let's say, you know, when, oh, probably in the '50's, later '50's, when he was already working at the Wayne Assembly plant down there.

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R: What do you think happened?

D: He probably became complacent like everybody else. He thought other values were more important, like, probably makin' money. So, he got interested more in his own household, you know. And, his hobby was building, you know, trying to build homes. And he became interested in that and that was, that was probably what took his inactivity in the union anymore. I just see some guys that keep on going forever. But those guys are probably some guys that got some kind of position in the union. They just keep on goin' and they get so many perks out of it so, as long as they got the position, they get the perks, they're still active in it. Other people, the direct loyalty of it, I don't know. There's probably very few. I don't know. Now, all of them go into it now for what's in it for them.

R: What do you mean? That's what you think folks go into it pretty much for?

D: What's in it for them, you know.

R: Can you give me an example? If you use names, if you did that's fine to explain a story. I'm not going to use the names when I write it but it sometimes helps a little when you're talking. And that's okay.

D: No, I wouldn't use names. But for example, probably, let's take a person working on the line now. You got a pretty hard job, he feels that if he runs for office, or something, someplace, he feels he gets a lot of extra perks for that. Sometimes they take him off the job. If he becomes a committee man he's off full page

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time, in Ford's. Other plants have stewards, they're off maybe 2 or 3 hours a day that they get off. But, anyways, for some, it takes them away from the daily grind of a production job all the time so, I think their primary interest in running for these things is to benefit themselves.

R: You got active, you were active. When I hired in, I remember, in '71, you were a committee man.

D: Well, no. That wasn't my idea. Like I first started to say. I like to work. I like to do accomplishing things. When I do something, I like to do it good. You're probably aware of what I do at work. It may seem like I'm not doing, you know, to a lot of people...

R: It seems like the machine is not running as fast as the other person, whose doing less, it seems like.

D: Yeah, definitely. But anyways, when I got involved, at that time, that was, I hired in in 1964, so that was 1967, I think. We had two shifts. That plant was. Well let's backtrack a little bit here. When I hired in '64 from Burroughs, I went in there not thinking that I was going to stay there as long as I have now. This is an interim part of my life, I thought I'd get called back to Burroughs, which I did. I had been working at the truck plant 6 months, I had a taste of it already. I was already pretty sure I was gonna go back. Uhh, and they did call me back. I already had 8 1/2 years there and I was a little skeptical of going back. I wanted to go back cuz I knew what kind of work it was, it was nice work. But the money wasn't there.

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R: You mean the money was better in the auto industry?

D: Yeah. Because of the amount of overtime that they push on you.

R: What do you mean?

D: I never got much overtime when I worked at Burroughs. It was basically a 8 - 4:30 job. If there was overtime, maybe it was, maybe a month out of the year. That was a rarity, you know. It never was consistent. And when I hired in at the truck plant there in '64, I think we started off, right after, we started off right off, 10 hours a day, 6 days a week. And it's been ever since for me, yeah. Just for a few slack periods. So the money, the money situation at that time was much better, it provided better things for me. At that time I was married, nice life, and I had four children.

R: In '64?

D: Yeah. So this extra income felt better. Anyhow, they called me back.

R: How much extra was it?

D: I think when I hired in I was making \$1.75 an hour and at present day today, we're making...(end of side one) It's a big difference from there to there. Now, when I hired in at Burroughs in '54 or '55, I think. It's hard to remember. I think I started out at about 85 cents an hour, or something like that and it progressed up, something like that.

R: And you had four children making 85 cents an hour? Or a dollar an hour?

D: Yeah, something like that. Everything else was low, you know.

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Anyways, when I hired in at the truck plant down there, the type of inspection work that I was familiar with at Burroughs was all what you would visualize inspection to be. Like, look at a blueprint or look at a part and check it and see if it's comparable or it's supposedly all right, that's it and you pass the ok on it.

While working in the automobile shop is a different line of inspection for me. (LAUGH)

R: Paint a picture for me.

D: Well, having not remembered much about automobiles and that coming down the line, you know, and the jargon that they use for describing everything, you know, like they have their own names for things they call. Ahh, oh, like ah, let me see. Whatever terminology some of them guys, some of the repairmen, use when they call a part or something like that. So, you have to learn, you have to learn those things while you're goin' along. And, ah, you know, if I seen a tire, I'd call it a tire. Or if I seen a rim, I call it a rim. Maybe, they, these are just some examples. But, like a cross member. Like, a lot of people don't know what a cross member is. Well, it's a part that connects one part of the frame to the other part. They call that a cross member, you know. It's a steel plate that's connected with both things. Stuff, to that example.

So, it took a long time, not that long, but it took time for me to adjust to the terminology, of it you know. To that type of inspection. Plus, we didn't have much safety then. Ahh, oil

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slippings (word?) on the floor all over. I mean, people work in all kinds of conditions. It was funny. I used to inspect and slip around all around, all around the assembly I'd hang on to the brake (?).

R: Really? Did they have clean up people, maintenance people?

D: They had 'em, they had 'em. Ahh, I guess they got involved when it became almost impossible for the production people to do a job. So, gradually, oh a big spillage, or something to that effect, they took care of it right away. But, the familiarity that we are familiar with now where you see a drop of oil or something, well you call and they fix it up now wasn't in existence then. They had too many other priorities. They didn't have enough people to cover all the imbalances of a proper maintenance program then. And, you know, I used to write out travel tickets, what they call inspection tickets, geez, I used to write so much stuff on there that, ahh, I'd be gettin' down on the line and start on another one. This kept continuously goin'.

We started off \$18 an hour, I think. But we built different kind of vehicles than now. We used to build buses, big long things, and trucks, well most of our trucks were all just plain trucks. Standard 3-speed or 4-speed. No, ahh, options. Very few options. (R: Stereo?) No, no, none of that stuff. No automatics. They were strictly farmer trucks. And, gradually, throughout the years these things picked up. When I got, I got put on torque (SP?) I was there about 3 months.

R: What is torque?

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D: Ahh, some kind of protection for the company to see that these vehicles are being built according to specification. They didn't have any program, but when I hired in production had just started. So they had to have some kind of record checking to maintain that these operations would be working. And, I've been on that same job ever since except for when a...

R: Explain to me exactly what that job was when you started. What does a torque person do? Then, paint a picture. What exactly, give me your day in terms of what you were doing. T-O-R-Q-U-E?

D: Yeah, T-O-R-Q-U-E. Well, at that time I sort of set up the program based on, more or less, safety items. At that time we didn't have a program on what to check. Like, from division.

R: What's a safety item?

D: Ahh, let's say cotter keys, lock nuts that secured things, front wheel bearings to make sure the play is right. Ahh, so most of the critical things, the important things, were made a point to check and keep...

R: To make sure the brake pedal was on? That kind of stuff?

D: The security of it, the security of it.

R: That it wasn't going to fall off, that kind of thing? That it wasn't tightened half way?

D: Right, right. Those security things. To make sure that we're not building a lot of these vehicles and they're not secured properly because of air tools not performing like they should.

R: Oh, I see, so you tested air tools?

D: Yeah, most of it was to check the air tools' function.

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R: Oh, I see.

D: And, up to the present time now we're into computers. Where we touch them with a torque wrench that computes it right on a data mite (word?), and now this information goes into the computer and is stored in the disc, you know. It eliminates quite a bit of paper work. To the good. I think it is better.

But now, the program's developed so much from that point of inception til now it's a regular part of manufacturing now. They set the program up from division on what they want to check, based on warranties and based on what the govenment wants checked. And, it's come a long way. So did the plant. It's come, from the time I started til now, the plant's concept is much better.

R: What do you mean?

D: A new-hire who comes in now, the plant environment is much, much better than when I went in. It's gotten better, the cleanliness of the plant is better, the facilities are there, probably the only difference and this is been something that's been passed on from years to years in our contract settlements is that every time we got raises, management coincided those raises with productivity. And, with the union's blessing. I mean, they understood that if they're gonna get raises they gotta get, they gotta create productivity to make it, to compensate for the raises. So, the work, the workload has gradually picked up throughout the years. Each assembly operation now is, in my opinion, a pretty heavy load for an individual.

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R: How did they increase the workload?

D: Well, my personal opinion, I think they, when a person becomes adapted to his job and he does it for a long time, it's pretty easy to give work to him because he knows how to, he knows how to pace himself on the job. And he gets better and everything becomes just the same routine over and over. He can generally adapt to an increase. What that leaves for somebody comin' after him is very rough.

R: What do you mean?

D: I mean, if he sets the standard based on his experience on the job, ahh, sometimes it becomes very, very difficult for people comin' after him to do that job. You remember that. You hired in, probably worked on the night shift, right?

R: Uh, uh.

D: Ok, most of the times, at that time, standards are set from the day shift people which had more experience. Those younger people had a very rough time on the night shift to keep up that kind of production standards that were set up. And they're not as high as they are at the present day now. They were lower then because, even when I was on committee, most of the workloads, they based the workloads on 480 minutes in a day, 8 hours, 60 minutes times 8 was 480. So most of the workloads then was about 4 or 430 at my time in '67 when I was on committee was pretty heavy then. I think now, they must have almost everybody up to about, at least, 440 on the workload.

R: So you have 480 workable minutes vs. working 440.

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D: Right. And some maybe more. Which I...

R: Enough time to take a deep breath in between jobs.

D: What they did allow that gap from 440 to 460 was, throughout an 8-hour period you've got, they allow you some minutes for parts not fitting, droppage of stock, stuff to this effect. But you see, they came to this out of the experience of people being on the job for a long time. That they're able to increase the workload of each individual. And, where this stops, it's very impossible to get 480 out of 480. I mean, I don't think there's no human that can keep that kind of pace.

But they try to get as much as they can. And, it's changed, that part. From the time I started. When I first started, I thought it was a lot of work. But they had so much overhead and excess just to get units out, but they always start out a new model like that, you know. And then they dwindle it down til they get going right. And if the market ain't there they just cut it down a little bit at a time, a little bit at a time. And, that's how they make their profits.

R: So you would say that the biggest change, in terms to the detriment of the people working, has been the speed up, the increased job overload. And that's how they've been able to continue to make their profits while giving wage increases?

D: Sure. Any place that manufactures and does business has a budget to follow, and I can understand that. They have to budget every year and they increase their budget, they pass it down to their subordinates to cut their budget down a little bit. And, in

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a big corporation like manufacturing automobiles and stuff like that, this is passed on down to the subordinates to increase productivity and eliminate costs.

R: Do you think that the American autoworker is a lazy autoworker?

D: No, I think he's probably the best worker, when he sets his mind to it.

R: Do you think that they don't, your fellow workers don't set their minds to it? Or they didn't during the '60's and now they do? What kind of changes do you see?

D: Well, I'm lookin' at a change now where everybody in there, I don't think there are any young people in there anymore. 35 years old. So all of them, all of them are so adapted to manufacturing a vehicle down there that that part has changed from before. And it's changed to the best for them because they adapt better and it's best for the company. I mean, they're gettin' the best results from these guys. How anybody's going to keep up this type of manufacturing in later years when these people are retired, you got me.

R: What do you mean?

D: Well, these paces that they say low costs, low expenses and high productivity, I don't, I can't see young people comin' from the outside and replacin' these people at that pace. Ahhh, it wouldn't seem possible. So my opinion, I think, that what they're doin' is a lot of automation has been comin' in. They know this. Automation has its place. The bad jobs, the dirty jobs, the

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menial jobs, and that's good. A lot of guys never wanted to do 'em anyways. You had one of 'em when you hired in. Everybody that did that job come out, they always had somethin' to say about it.

But, I don't know where young people are gonna go after this.

R: See, that's why they're also setting up, see this is so common, they're setting up the two-tier system where young will get paid less so they won't expect them to do as much work but they're paying 'em less and that's how they're gonna get 'em to do the jobs.

D: That may be so. That may be so.

R: As you're saying it, it's just become clear to me why. I never put it together. Let's keep.

D: That may be so. I never gave that a thought, but you may be right.

R: Cuz that's exactly what they're doing at. The Japanese auto industry pays the people that make the transmissions a lot less than those who assemble at the plant - the trucks, the cars. So GM and Ford can get rid of their parts. More people, but they're not high paid union workers. They're low paid union workers.

So Ford could get rid of the Saline plant and Rossinville (name?) plant and make it, you know, owned by the Sears, or something. And they don't have to pay 'em the same thing. That's what they'd like to do.

D: Sure. I believe that.

R: Let's keep on these changes. I think, I mean, you've seen, you

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hired in '64, '74, you've been there 22 years now. It's the 23rd year at the Ford plant. Talk about, what kind of relationships, how has the worker changed. You were saying that when they put their minds to it they can produce as much as they want, they're really hard working folks. But how has it changed? Smarter?

D: They're smarter, they adapt easier.

R: How do you know they weren't smarter before? Why do you say that?

D: Well, let me give you an example. The guy that we had working on our line, on line 2, in trim, Caz is his name? They made him a check and adjust. Now the man's got almost the same amount of seniority that I have, pretty close to it. He'd been on that same job prior to that, that last build-up and stall - almost 20 years. Never changed. He wanted that job. Then by this new classification come out, check and adjust, he took it. Now he's from the old country. Been here a long time but still didn't have any inclination to change. I mean, he was gonna work that same job probably til he died or til he retired out of there. So they give him the check and adjust and that opened up something all new for him. He had this, to know a whole new part about the whole damn truck and he's learned. It's taken him a long time, but he's learned, you see. And what I was trying to say is that most of the people are not like him anymore. We don't have immigrants any more in our plants, comin' in, working, from different countries. Mostly we've got nothin' but high school graduates. A lot of 'em are college, some college. Smarter people

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and a lot of 'em that do come in, if they're knowledgable on automobiles, probably worked on 'em at home as young kids and that, they adapt so quick, so much quicker, that they learn, they learn quicker.

R: What about, that's the same group of folks that you say learn quicker that, you know, 5 years ago or even now, the company is sayin' they're all doped up and they're all drunk? Was that a problem over the years? How was that a problem? And how has it changed?

D: Oh, yeah. Well, I remember in the '60's, early '70's, especially on the night shift, you take Fridays and Saturdays and Mondays was a very critical time. I mean. Mondays, the people probably were staying home cuz they were pooped out from working a 6-day, 10-hour shift, if they put 6 days. Friday was a pay day and that was either taken off or a lot of drinkin' - not directly inside the plant, but a lot of drinkin' off the job. Smokin' grass, a lot did. That was a younger bunch of people. Saturday was the same thing, when they worked the Saturday. Take about half way before the night's over, afternoon shift, about 8, 9 o'clock. After lunch anyways, them guys were gettin' geared for getting off work at 12 and partying.

R: How many people would you say? 1 out of 10? 1 out of 100?

D: Yeah, probably 1 out of 50, maybe. Maybe it was goofed up in certain areas more than other areas, yeah probably about, the amount of people that was there. Yeah, probably, 1 out of 50 I'd say. Not, not, not enough to condemn the whole operation, though.

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R: How did it interfere with production?

D: (LAUGH) Well, their attitude as far as manufacturing. Whatever went, went. I mean, if the guy for some reason missed his operation and nobody caught it, what he's supposed to do, and nobody caught it, that's the way it went out, see? They went through the motions, more or less. But, I was surprised. A lot of guys can handle that stuff and do a good job, too. (LAUGH) It's not all like that, but there's some that can do that. I know some that just, in there, that they're in a different kind of ecstasy at that stage when they're maybe half-tight or, 3/4 or something but still, they can do it. How they do it, you got me. It's the after-effects maybe, with this stuff.

R: What did the company do about all this? What do they do now? How has it changed?

D: Well, as you can see now you got different, different personnel workin' there now. I mean, not different personnel, I mean, older personnel. Like I said there's nobody, probably, I don't think, under 35. Which means they probably got at least 12 years and up seniority, most of them pretty well established with their families, so they're, become more responsible. They won't take chances no more. They got a family, it reverts back to the same times when the unions were first organizing. You have a certain amount of people that would probably do anything just to keep an income comin' in to the household. Now, these people that are older would not do that. But they will keep up the paces and do the complaining, but they will keep up the production paces

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because of the seniority they got involved and the money situation that keeps 'em goin'. Ahh, I don't think you can get, I don't think that these people would vote for a strike (??) for any damn reason.

R: You don't think for anything?

D: I don't think so. I think they become too oriented with the paycheck and, I don't see, I don't see, but they said, but they said apparent. But, like I say, if all these guys retired, who comes in, they'll have to revert back to the old ways and lower the standards again and lower the wages, which is what they would like all over. And, then you might have the same thing startin' all over again. I'm lookin' at it at a different perspective now. I'm getting close to retirement. I'll just roll with the waves, now. I don't, I take care of myself, if I feel I'm being violated contractually, or something like that, they'll catch it from me. But I do it as a person, for myself. Because I do know the functions of the contract. I know what my entitlements are and I really don't make waves with management because I do maintain my job there. But whether other people would. They don't do it directly. They shoot it off at the committee man to do it for them, not to make him look bad.

R: What do you mean?

D: Well, a lot of guys really, really don't voice their opinions. They don't like their (Unintelligible) to find out that they're makin' a complaint. So they'll voice it probably through a committee man so that he's the intermediate and he takes the page

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brunt of the problem.

R: That's different from the way it used to be?

D: I don't know, I don't know.

R: I mean, when you were a committee man...

D: Oh no, they passed the buck on to me, too. Yeah, yeah. They passed the buck to me. Let me take the. When I was a committee man, I, ahh, it's a funny situation there. We had more, we were a little more rebellious in the plant then. My time as committee man was spent, I think we had more turmoil in that plant than plants ever had.

R: What was the turmoil over? What are the fond memories?

D: Well, the paint boots (?), walk out, no coveralls, safety problems that they thought.

R: What kind coveralls? Paint (?) boots.

D: Well, the contract said that each painter's supposed to have a new set of coveralls every day. Well, they tried to give them one time old coveralls that didn't cover, you know, all their clothes. Stuff to that effect. Maybe the exhaust didn't work properly.

R: And what would you do and what would the union do? What would the folks on the line do when that happened? Back in '67, '68.

D: We had a couple of wildcats, if I recall, just walkouts. I don't remember, well I remember one that the plant did walk out for the plant chairman when I was on committee because they gave him 3 days off for, for, what was it for. Something that, something that with labor relations he voiced his, was adamant

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about.

R: Who was this Fred ___?

D: Jim Shuger (sp). So then they had a walkout then the next day and the company got aware of it, that somethin' was happening when they did that. And, but what happened in the walkout was, I don't know, you didn't have everybody walk out. You had some stayed, just reverted back to the people that, just don't get involved, you see. Probably half of them went off, enough to curtail their production but not stop it. They stopped the line, they had no repairmen. Everybody that stayed, they had to do some function, or maybe slowed the line down, whatever. And then what happened after that, the one incident I remember is that, they took, yeah, I remember now. The union at that time was, if you were directly involved as a representative, if you were directly involved in the walkout, you would be fired, probably. Even by the laws of the international union, you'd probably get back, they'd have to fight for you to get you back in. So you had to take a different attitude toward the walkout. Try to have go with management and walk around and say, if somethin's gonna happen or somethin' then don't get involved, you know. My position was, you know, I stand there, I said, I'm not gonna walk around and tell everybody. However they feel, that's up to them. I says I will tell 'em when they walk out, if they do walk out, I says, I will try to tell 'em to go back on their jobs. I'll do that.

But anyways, after that incident happened, ahhh, we had about 250 guys get written up. Letters in the mail.

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R: To their families, huh?

D: Yeah, letters that they were gonna be penalized. Those that had bad records, some of 'em got fired and they have to work on them to get 'em back. The plant chairman he probably got, he got reinstated back. He got his money back, the others guys lost out. Stuff on their record. Really, not much of an accomplishment of what had happened, just that it showed a little strength.

R: Was that important? Did it matter?

D: Well, sure as hell it mattered later on, yeah, yeah. They were, they were very cautious on what they were, what they would try to do down there. In other words, uhhh, if I knew they were breakin' the contract or something, or what, hey as a committee man, and really took a position, and if they didn't correct it, you know, they were kinda leary. So they, it made their relationship probably, towards union problems, a little bit better. As it is now, as you can see now, it is more or less workin' with the company. And that's the way the contract's bein' spelled out now.

R: How is the contract like that now? What does that mean that it's working with the company?

D: It was always in there, in the contract down there, but the people didn't understand it. I think that is that people understand it more now. For several factors, but like I say, their age, their seniority and that. So they do compromise more so, than being rebellious at that time. I don't think they write

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up as many people now in the labor relations agreement than when I was on committee. Now they have intermediates (END OF TAPE ONE - BREAK IN TAPE)

R: Do you think it's been a better change? How, what do you think has been a better change?

D: Oh, yeah. I think the cooperation should be better. I mean, management should take a position of, and consider the employe's needs and his problems without discipline first.

R: They do that, huh?

D: I think they do that, yeah. I think they take more involvement in it. Back there when I was on committee, and like I say, this the production superintendents and the, ahh, probably production shipping manager. Now they had the power. They had the power, to dictate to labor relations, you know. They wanted somethin' done, they do it. Now, I think now, what I've seen, the labor relations dictate to them. They don't have that direct power now. I'll give you an incident that happened to me when I was on committee.

Ahhh, you remember Collins? Ok. I had a guy back there on the frame line that was always being told, "We're goin' home. Relief for so-and-so." Then change it. They'd change it about 3 or 4 times. So...

R: Give me an example. The relief man would be told.

D: Well, this wasn't a relief man. He got relieved.

R: Oh, he was someone on the line.

D: Yeah. And he was told what time they were goin' home, then it was changed, then it was changed again. So, ahhh, I got in and

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told him that, when was the last time he (UNINTELLIGIBLE) which was an hour or so before quitting time, I says, I says, that's when you got relieved for, I said, well go home then.

Well, he took the position (?) and left. The other guys probably coulda done it and still nothin' happened. Ahhh, so the superintendent at that time, the next day, took it into labor relations and wanted him written up. I got mad like hell cuz he was in violation of the contract. The superintendent. And labor relations went along with him. And I was so mad and adamant in the office and hollerin' and all that that the what the superintendent was tryin' to project was a lesson, a show that he has the authority to send him back out there. And the guy got penalized and sent home the next day. And loss of pay is what they tried to write it up as. But I was so adamant in my position that soon's it was done, the labor relations manager said, 'Forget about it,' he says, 'Don't even write the grievance.' He says, 'I'll pay the man for bein' off.' He wanted to pacify the superintendent.

These kinda incidents. I don't think they happen anymore cuz I don't think those guys have the authority anymore to do that.

R: So you think the labor relations are more like social workers now?

D: Yeah.

R: Are trying to keep the peace and a more responsible relationship than the superintendent who was just getting, trying to keep everybody in line? But they don't have to now. There's

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the EI program. People's attitudes have changed. What do you think of that?

D: The EI program?

R: Yeah. What do you think of that?

D: Well in my plant, that's all I can compare it by, both people I know real good, I like 'em. I think they're pretty good, yeah. I think at first, when it first started off it was out of sync. Guys were tryin' to find out all kind, input on all kinda job eliminations and all that. I think now they've geared it down. They don't, they don't ahhh, open their mouth to that effect. I think now they just put in problems that they have to be resolved. They don't get no corrections by a supervisor or some problem. I think now they're probably goin' in the right direction.

R: To do what? What kind of problems and what, let me just ask that. What do you see it solving? What kind of problems is the EI program solve?

D: What's it solve? Well, I think like, an example. Well let's say, you told your foreman for hours or all day that you're having trouble with the part not fitting, not fitting, not fitting. And you're struggling throughout the day, not gettin' it done, not gettin' it done. And he tells the EI coordinator there's (unintelligible) down there, to bring this up. And because he brought it to somebody else's attention, somebody automatically gets involved on it, a process engineer or higher up. And they resolve the problem. Makes his job run smoother.

What's, what's basically he wants to do a good job and he's not getting any, any ahh, accomplishment from his supervisor. I think in those fields, that kind of function will, ahh.

R: Do you think it's going to replace the union? What's the purpose of the union now? What's the purpose of the union? You got, you got what, how many more years? Six more years. In the next 6 years, what do you the union's going to be like, what's it going to do? And then after that? What does it do?

D: I don't think it's ever going to have a rebellious authority anymore. Like I said when we started off on the interview, I think those people we have function in the union now function for 'what's in it for me?'. There's very few that are (BACKGROUND NOISE INTERRUPTS) What are we talkin' about now?

R: What the union's gonna become. What's the union gonna become in 10 years, the year 2000? What do you think?

D: I don't, I don't think it's just gonna be functioning as a figurehead. They're gonna have their conventions and stuff like that, stuff they're gonna learn, work-related problems and so forth like that. It's gonna be hard to re - to input back into the rebellious attitude when things aren't runnin' the way they should contractually. They still ain't backin' the employees now. I don't see it.

R: Do you think the autoworker is better off now than he was?

D: Oh, yeah, sure. Well, wage-wise he's better off, working conditions are a helluva lot better. They definitely are. The only thing I see is that productivity, it keeps increasing every

time we get somethin', stuff like that. Yeah, I think it's better. Don't you think it's better?

R: I think in terms of those who are working it's much better. And I think that the price has been those who have been laid off. And those that have been excluded. The general rule is that the company and union will take care of the higher seniority folks and everybody else is gonna get stepped on worse and worse. So it doesn't represent what a union once represented which is solidarity. It represents taking care of the few. And that's what the skilled trades used to be before there was the CIO and that's what the AFL used to be, to take care of the particular trade and exclude everybody else. And I think that's basically what has happened. I agree with you. I think it destroys people's, I think the human cost for the person working is a sense of community, a sense of collectivity and a sense of dignity. Cuz I think that we just take care of ourselves, individual dignity and, I don't know, I think that's a real human cost in terms of what it means to be human. But that's sorta esoteric and not, but that doesn't relate really to the struggles of the plant.

D: Oh yeah, you see that in everyday life now. I mean. You're living downtown now, or in the vicinity. But probably in your near future or later on, you'll probably drift out to the suburbs or someplace. I mean, you fall into the same pattern of everybody else. When things are getting a little bit better, you want to move up. I don't know if you're drifting, or, but it's a possibility, don't eliminate it.

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R: It's possible. I think it's possible.

D: And I think life in general, that's what's happening. When we go back, when we're going back to the union's participation into the automobile shop, it's, I don't think it's going to be a part of any competition, or any kind of rebellious thing. It's going to be of trying to exist, co-exist with both management and the union's part both functioning as one. And you're right about taking care of what's in there now because of seniority and this is what they emphasize now. All these perks that are comin' now that they instituted, was really instituted for older person's attitude - profit sharing, bonus clauses - all geared for, all geared for a person who is pretty well established in life and this is more or less a perk for him. Those programs that they put out now, which are good.

R: Which programs?

D: Investment programs that they put out for hourly people.

R: What kind of investment programs?

D: A TESP programs.

R: What's that?

D: Tax Efficiency Savings Plan. Now for a young guy, new hire in, he wouldn't know a damn thing about it and care less. Now that ain't puttin' no money in his pocket. He wants the money in his pocket so he can go out and blow it. Lotta young people feel that way. Or running around, stuff to that effect. Money's meant to be spent. As you get older, money's meant for different things.

R: Do you participate in some of these programs?

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D: Everyone, everyone that's (UNINTELLIGIBLE)

R: What does that actually mean? How are you preparing for retirement?

D: That's part of it yeah. I use that as incentive to sink' it away for retirement. I probably follow the same pattern as like I said, my father. After his real involvement in unionism, his attitude changed after awhile. One of the important things he told me, and I seen him as a committee man too. It's funny, unions, right now unions, even to this present time probably, maybe less so now, you're really protecting maybe, or working for the profit of maybe 20, or maybe not even that percentage, maybe 20-25 percent, if that high, of the people. The rest you run into too much of a problem or chronic problems. And the kind of problems I'm talkin' about is problems that a lot of 'em create for themselves. Drug problems, or whatever problems they got. Absenteeism, work-related problems. You're always, you're always, the union's time is almost always spent on the minority of people. I would say 90% of the time they never have to messed around with 90% of the people. It's always about 10-15%. So,

R: What do you think, I just have a couple more questions. The union, the auto industry has played what is probably the most central role in America for the last, this century. I mean the history of this century. What do ^{you} see it doing, when you're son, your youngest son, ~~who~~ is, ahh, 20 years old?

D: Well, I'm like WWII guys that came home and had to work. They said, I'd like my kids to go to school and get a better job, a

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different job than what they had. I feel the same way. I don't see no jobs like we got now opening up for kids just finishing high school. So definitely the need is going to be higher education. What this is going to develop in later on in the years is probably part of what's happening now - a service oriented society. A service-oriented job is overtaking manufacturing jobs. Manufacturing jobs being, what they can do here, they do; what they can get done cheaper at foreign countries, they do and import it in here. They're drifting toward a two wage-earner society, husband and wife. At a lower scale wage. Now they say to compete, I don't know.

R: To compete, with who?

D: Foreign, foreign imports here. I think it's a big farce. I mean for big corporations. I never believed their loyalty was to any country. They're loyalty is probably to the dollar. To make the buck, that's what they're for. So how do you hide from that? So young people, I feel that whatever you can prepare for them in later on society, try to do it. They may run into the same problems we run into, or they may start all over again. I don't know.

But, it's changed. I don't think it's ever gonna go back to what it was way back. I even, I even look at the present state of let's go back to the foreign countries again, how they're changing in Russia, and Poland and Hungary, China, all countries that were in our time what they called the Iron Curtain countries. Now, they're slowly realizing now that you can't keep

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functioning like this, you gotta have a sort of a capitalistic society so that people get a little bit better and that. Don't you see that? I mean, ahh, don't you see the changes?

R: Not in that same way. I think there are changes but I think that any country tries to search for a way to advance its standard of living.

D: Yeah, but this opens up a market for all the, what you call it, investors, big money people.

R: Are you optimistic when you think of the future, for your son?

D: No, not for him. I only have this one now, but if a person has a big family or something, it's pretty difficult cuz how can you provide for all of them? You only have to get, the only way you can do it with a bigger size family is to give shelter and ahh, and ahhh, and just hope. You couldn't give 'em a guarantee of education for 'em or stuff like that which they may need. But I think they'll survive, everybody survives, generation after generation survives. It's never, no matter how bleak things look, this country's only ours for a period of time and then new people come in an change.

I had a class in statistical control that I took for 2 weeks at the plant, you know, makin' all those graphs and all that. Well, you see all these graphs they put on the board and all that? Problem areas and so forth and they take a bunch of readings and this. Problems, they record it and give a mean and they make a graph out of it. Their new method of controlling problems. Well anyway, this one guy, he showed a videotape on

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this one guy, from Denver or something.

R: From Texas, a professor from Texas?

D: I don't know, he just got killed in a car accident, if that's the same one. This was a year or two ago. How he would gauge generations every ten-year period, their thoughts and all that. Did you see that? Now wasn't that,...

R: Yeah, I seen that. About how we are what we were.

D: Yeah, something like that. And, it's funny, your thoughts, it's not funny, but I mean, it's actually true that that's the thinking. That let's say people who are born in the '30's, the aftermath of the Depression era, and they still hold to conservative views. Another ten-year period got another different view, another 10. Prior to a, what it is, the '80's, you got a different type of viewpoint by a younger generation that are gonna grow up. I found that, that on the tape to be true.

R: Let me get a few little background stuff. Your mom was, she basically stayed at home working? Did she worked outside the home? Where did she come from?

D: From Detroit. She worked during the war years. I think '42 or '43 in the Lincoln-Mercury during the war for a couple years.

R: That where she met your dad?

D: No.

R: No, no, sure, sure. Sorry.

D: She worked during the war years and then when the second World War ended she left the shop like most of the women in the shop left.

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R: So she was Rosie the Riveter?

D: Yeah, one of those war effort wives. She worked the afternoon shift and my dad was the day shift man. So that's what we grew up with.

R: Was she proud to be working in the plant then?

D: Oh, yeah, she loved it, yeah. I think she loved it, yeah. She learned a different perspective. That's where she learned how to smoke, how to maybe sit around with the girls sometimes after work, have a beer. Stuff like that.

R: She's Polish?

D: She's Polish, yeah. My dad's Polish.

R: And you lived in Hamtramch, or where?

D: No, west side, up around the, I've always lived, I've always lived here around Southfield and Warren, between Southfield and Evergreen. I was brought up there.

R: That's you were born there, huh?

D: No, I was born around Livernois area and McGraw, that's where I was born. We lived down there 10, 12 years and then, where I'm living presently now, I think right after the second world war we moved out here. There was nothin' out here then. Blank. Just farm here and there. My dad bought 3 1/2 or 5 acres. And that's where I grew up since then.

R: So you moved from McGraw-Livernois to the Dearborn area? You're in Dearborn now? That was still Detroit? It was almost country?

D: It was country when I first moved from Livernois, I was only

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about a year or two years old then and then we moved around the Southfield area. That's where I really grew up til about 10, 12 years old. It was country then. Homes built up mostly probably during the second world war. The same thing happened here right after the war, '46 and '47 when we come over here. There was nothin' out here. Roads weren't paved, main roads, none of 'em were. And, that's ahh, 30 years ago, 40 years ago now.

R: Which high school did you go to?

D: Chadsey, in Detroit.

R: What kind of things, I know you play golf. When did you start golfing?

D: Oh, I've always been athletic, all my life. I did mostly baseball, played baseball a lot. Even pursued it almost to a professional career but, I went in the service in '51 and when i come out, I was already 23, 22, 23. I didn't pursue it anymore.

R: Do you regret that sometimes?

D: Oh yeah. Yeah I thought about that. You gotta remember now, in my time, the baseball times were not as expanded (?) as they are now. And so the jobs, there weren't that many there. If you weren't a great player, you'd probably be stuck in the minor league system forever. Now, it's a little different now. You don't have to be, they got so many teams, so many jobs in the leagues, it's a possibility that if you excel at certain things, you might make it.

Yeah, I regretted that for a long time cuz I played, competed in baseball, hell, up to age 38. At the truck plant I

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played softball until I pulled a hamstring. And I said, that's it, I'm gettin' too old for this thing. And I haven't played since then. I think, about a couple of years after that I started takin' up golf. But I did play golf before then.

R: And you play with guys at work? Do you socialize much with guys at work?

D: That's what changes in your lifetime. As you grow up, you know, you hang around with kids, your friends from high school or the neighborhood. And then in the span of a lifetime, things change. You hang around with people you work with, or you get involved in athletic things with the people that you work with. And then, most of the people you knew from high school and around the old neighborhood or somethin' like that, you lost your association with. And then, as you get older it becomes just the family. But I still do hang around with 'em, yeah. Of course. Various activities with guys from work, or my family.

I never thought, I never thought myself as I was growing older that a friend of mine that maybe I ran around with when I was single, you know, that I wouldn't see no more, you know. You've seen that?

R: Sure, sure. I've seen it. And what, when you retire, what do you plan to do?

D: Oh, I don't know. I've thought a lot about Florida. I'm not so sure about that. It's a possibility I might move down there, have a house built down there. I'm a little limited what we can do. I've got a son 4 years old now, in 6 years he'll only be

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about 10. So, I have to get in a community where children are there. But, we bought a lot in Florida that is just the right community, it's not retirees. It's the kind of community like for young people. So, I may do that but then again I may not. Just may stay here. But, I don't know what travel plans would be. I would be retired and my wife would probably have to stay home and let me play golf. Did you hear that?

R: This is your second family?

D: Yeah.

R: What are your other, your older children from your first family doing?

D: My boy is in Oklahoma, he works for a bakery, full-time. On weekends he's a disc jockey at a radio station down there. He went to school to be a disc jockey but that's a real low-paying job unless you're at the top. So he does this now in Tulsa, he's married, has one child. My daughter is married here, has three daughters. My other daughter finished Central. She's in San Antonio, working for a radio station down there. As marketing. And my two boys and other daughter, my other daughter I don't see much. I don't know what she does. She sorta stays away. The other two I see on occasion. One's staying here where my dad used to live. My dad's in a nursing home now, he's kinda watching the house. And the other one, now, I think they're both cooks. No, one was a cook now he's workin' at Farmer Jack's, stock boy. That's my youngest from my first marriage. But, I have two married and four still single.

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R: You had six children from your first marriage? Large family, large family.

D: No wonder I never saved nothin'.

R: How could ya, how could ya. What do you like best about being a father now, the second time?

D: I think, I think this is the best time to have children, when you get older. The only thing is they wear you out. They will wear you out if you let 'em. I mean, they got so much energy, they burn it out. Well, you got a boy, you know. How old is he?

R: He's just two, he's just two years old.

D: Well you're really beginning in your involvement (?). These guys, they never stop. I mean, when they stop, they're out. Then they wake up again and then they start all over. And, as you get older, I don't know if it's happened to you yet. But, sometimes, I want to come home from work, read the paper, drink the coffee, peace and quiet, watch a little TV and you doze off here and there. Or, go outside. That's the way I'm regimented now. But, if you got a little one, he wants you to play with him, do this, listen to him. (END OF SIDE THREE OF TAPE)

You know, everything is, you're not rushed more. You can go, but they'll burn you out. You're not rushed like when you were young, raising kids, you always pawn all the kids off on the (UNSURE OF FOLLOWING PHRASE) people, you'd be doing whatever you're doing, whether it be sports, working on the car, working around the house.

But, as you get older those activities are not that much

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meaningful so you do have more time to adapt, but you don't have the physical strength that you had, to counteract the other.

R: In terms of the relationships in the plant, how people have gotten along over the years, have you seen that change? Among the workers themselves. Between men and women, blacks and whites, how has that changed and if you can think of any examples? When you hired in if you can remember examples between blacks and whites and how it's changed now?

D: When I hired in, we had no women workers. We didn't have any women workin' there for, ahh, 10, 15 years. They always thought that working in a truck plant was too strenuous for women and nobody ever challenged them to force them to put women to work. So that's why they didn't hire any. The black situation in our plant, I think they just compromised. I mean, you know, we got a lot of people from the South working in that plant, their attitudes haven't changed.

R: Haven't changed?

D: They tolerate 'em, work with 'em and so forth like that, but they still want the separation between the two.

R: How does that show itself in the plant?

D: It doesn't show itself so much in the plant now.

R: Well, why do you say that?

D: I mean, their attitudes. Him and my dad were both fired for organizing unions.

R: Yeah? I should interview him.

D: Yeah, you could try. He's, he was a local's president I think

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the longest, during the war years. Then he moved up to the international and he retired from the international. But now he's the president of the retired chapter at our local. And, you want to know something? Activity in the union, back to that. You asked me a question, but let me go back to that. Activities in the unions now is governed now for the present employees working now, nobody ever attends the union meeting. Very rarely do they ever get a quorum, unless there's a strike vote, or something like that, some special occasion. They have more people coming to their once a month, monthly meeting of the retirees. I mean, that hall is packed, with retirees. I mean they're more involved as retirees than they were when they were active probably.

And I can also remember in the years before, especially during the war years up til the war years and after, membership meetings at the local, when they had a meeting, they had quorums, at membership meetings. They were packed, all the time, all the time. And when they had rowdiness at a meeting, their sergeant-at-arms, which my dad was at one time, they just grabbed the guy and threw him out and that was it. Conduct a meeting the way it was supposed to be done. Now it's very difficult now to try to control that kind of activity at a membership meeting when you have 'em. If somebody wants to dominate the floor. They don't do this now cuz the reactions are altogether different now than they were then.

R: What do you mean?

D: Well you know, whether a guy's got a knife on him or a gun or

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something. You're gonna react differently than they did then. Plus the support of the people at the membership meeting then would dictate that you have to throw 'em out, they're disrupting the meeting.

R: There was a consensus to do what's right? Now it's the consensus to do whatever you want to do?

D: Yeah. Right. I think so, yeah.

R: You're active with the retirees classes, or something? What do you actually do?

D: Yeah. I give the, what they call the Successful Pre-Retirement Planning for people, this is a joint plan between the company and the union and the union is working out of the National Training Center in Henry Ford Community College section there. And all this does is make people aware of their plan to retire. My job is just to coordinate it. Get the resource people, make sure I got the tapes, I've got a plan to follow, make sure my refreshments are there.

R: Do you get paid by anybody, the union, the company?

D: I have a budget that they allow me from the National Training Center. And from that budget I'm gonna pay, I have to pay my hours when I get involved in it, not when I'm workin' on the line. The class, like I say, is 7:30 to 9:30. That covers that plus any other expenses I incur. I pay resource people \$50, I can go only \$50, but most of them are free. They'll speak for free. \$50. And refreshment costs. So, that should cover all of it.

R: Let's finish up your thoughts on whites and blacks and how

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it's changed. Were you saying that hasn't changed?

D: Well. I don't think it's affected much in the plant but I see there's resentment there. Probably I can see, ahh, we have a lot of Southern people workin' by us but their attitudes are still, they tolerate 'em and work with 'em and all that, but they wouldn't associate with 'em and all that. Where it was years ago, the minority of blacks in the plant there, they wouldn't have nothin' to say. I mean, all unionism activity was dominated by the whites at that time. So, they never really had a major role in unionism at all. Now, they're getting involved in it. They're getting involved in it cuz of numbers. I'll say this. You, it's hard, if you got a predominantly black plant, and let's say you're a white person and wanted to run for office and you have all the credentials and you are probably a better person for the qualified job, you won't make. You just won't make it now. So the thing has shifted now where I don't that works in a fifty-fifty percent plant, let's say in union activities. In a fifty-fifty percent plant, from the white, cuz I've been highly involved in the politics of the union til lately, I don't get involved much any more. You would, it's hard to beat that black faction running for office in a plant any more cuz he's got that block vote. Regardless, if he has the credentials you know, regardless. The attitude of the white person voting in a union election now, they still have the inclination well, if the man's good, they'll vote for him, regardless of color. I can't say 100% of blacks think that, but I will say 80% or 90% would if they have a chance.

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R: They'll vote colors? More than whites will vote color?

Or is it just that there's more whites?

D: Yeah, I think so. I think more so. More so. They will vote that way. I can't blame 'em cuz they been mistreated in their respect for years and years and years. The dominance was always by the white faction. So they find a power solution now and this is the way they operate. But, that's a bad attitude cuz there's some good people in both places and that should be balanced out. But it's a hard faction to eliminate. Attitudes change, you can inter-mix with 'em here and there but still, somewhere along the line, they're still not compatible, I don't know what the hell, I don't know what the solution is to something like that. In fact, at our plant about, they do work along pretty good. But they do still have their separation. I don't think whites will move in where they're living and, that's all.

R: One guy suggested that I should interview Miles (?) and two couples. I don't mind doing that if the couple wants to.

D: My wife is probably smirking there cuz she thinks I do a lot of talking about the plant but I, they irritate me sometimes on this point because of the position that they take sometimes especially when I see some good people running. And being into the elections more so, probably, I think I'm comparing it with Detroit because Detroit, that's what happened to 'em. I mean, there's good people.

Mrs. M.: He and I don't agree about this. He believes that the blacks just vote for blacks and that the whites will be fair. And

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I believe that both people are just as, just as..(interrupted)

D: No, no, you don't know. Cuz I've been involved in elections and you haven't.

R: How many whites have voted for blacks?

D: I haven't kept any record. I just know this from people that I talk to, people that I've seen throughout my working at the plant and my involvement in elections at the local. I will say this truthfully, I used to guage some of the results on the, results of the elections and there are trends that indicate, if you watch 'em really closely, I can't recall (UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE) I used to really get involved in 'em and we'd watch those patterns. It'd be darn hard and this is how I came to the conclusion, or that thought, that feeling.

R: When you say that that's what you perceive in the plant and then you see, this last election for governor where Macomb county who was ready to recall Blanchard a year ago voted overwhelmingly for Blanchard this time cuz Lucas was black, how do you reconcile that, how do you see that?

D: Well, Lucas was not a good candidate to be a governor. Not...

Mrs. M.: If what you say is true, if the Republicans were loyal and the blacks were loyal, he would have gotten in. If he would have gotten the Republican vote and the black vote, he would have made it. But he didn't. He didn't have the black vote, he didn't have the white vote, he didn't have the women's vote. Blacks didn't support him cuz he was Black. Republicans didn't support him because he was a Republican.

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D: You're wrong. Blacks did support him. I'll bet you, I'll bet you...

Mrs. M.: If he had the black vote...

R: Maybe, but he didn't even get 20% of the vote, he less of the vote than Headless did out of Detroit.

D: Okay. How many voted in Wayne county?

R: That's a percentage.

(ARGUMENT CONTINUES back and forth)

R: It's clear that the voting did not coincide with the vote that you see in the plant. Otherwise, Lucas would have gotten, cuz all the black leaders came out against Lucas, the democrats. I mean Coleman Young, Conyers, all those folks came out against Lucas.

Mrs. M: Isn't the Republican party predominantly white? If the republicans were loyal and would vote for a black, he would have gotten their vote.

R: Lousma got all these votes in Macomb county...I think the perception is important. In the long hand, this is your opinion not an argument, you said that you think whites get along in the plant with blacks, but when it comes to voting. It doesn't matter. What does it matter to the cohesiveness of the plant? Is there a lack of cohesiveness? Is there a lot of animosity? Except during election time by those who are running? You know.

D: That's probably right, that's probably right. And even then. But you see, I'm talking about 75-25, so we have a dominance there.

R: Is it different at Zwieback (?) That's about 40% black?

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D: I'd say yeah, pretty close to it, yeah.

R: Did you find that, I mean you were a white union representative in the late '60's-early '70's at a time when blacks were finally saying, "It's my turn. I've had enough. I've stood up now as a man cuz of the civil rights and black power movements and I'm going to get part of the responsibility, part of the action." And that's more important than anybody else, than any white can do. I'm gonna see if I can do it myself. You were in sort of the midst, regardless of what your views are it's very hard for a white to maintain a position in the eyes of blacks cuz blacks are for the first time saying, "Hey, it's my turn. I can do it just as good as Don can." They could, the momentum of the times, you represent that sort of. I remember myself, my view was very much in support of Charlie, and Larry and Tom and Tom Wesley in that period.

D: Why were you doing that?

R: Because the greatest injustice of America has been racial injustice and here for the first time was a chance to turn that over.

D: But you see, I remember that time. But you see what happened that time. You weren't supporting the best quality of person but you were expressing a support for your ideas. But back to quality, I could tell you that everyone that you just mentioned weren't qualified to be representative in that category. From the time of, what's his name again, Shirall (sp), up to Tommy Allman, up to, even when Charlie first started he wasn't. I showed ~~the~~

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Charlie, and I gave Charlie a lot of expertise in how to work on the job. I never tried to hold back from him on anything because of Charlie being on opposite sides or whatever. Learn the job and learn it right and I could see that with him and I tried to help him out on anything I could.

Those other people are being supported, and this is what irked the hell out of me in there, I see people supporting, some of the people I thought. I'm not saying hey, the groups I was with were 100%. I never did vote 100%. If a qualified person I thought at a certain level, I mean, he'd get my vote. When I draw the curtain, I'm not telling people what I'm voting. That's my privilege. But, I'm a firm believer myself in quality and try to project this kind of representation for all people in the plant.

R: Do you think your (?) is representative?

D: The vote? Ahh, no, no (?) is, no.

R: See, I dropped out of the newsletter when in fact we put out a flyer that you shouldn't vote for Jimmy Coleman because he was incapable of doing the job but you shouldn't vote for Popovich because he was a member of the Moose club, and some of the racism that was coming down. And we got a flyer, I remember distinctly, we had all agreed to put out from the newsletter that said exactly that, don't vote for either of them and then vote for just not particular folks. Nobody else handed out that flyer except me when it came that Monday. That's when I stopped. They didn't want to go against Coleman. I remember that distinctly. You're absolutely right that that went on, there was not a

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principled politic above the racial thinking. You're absolutely right.

Now, we don't have the time to go into it, but I think it was a very important time when the union was not, the union was in the process of becoming "what can I get out of it." You know, membership wasn't real involved. Blacks got real involved because it was their chance to get involved in something that was important. Everybody else was moving out, see how much money they could get. So there was no, we have two different historical periods, representing two different colors. One was going this way, one was coming in. And, just like Coleman Young gets the city of Detroit when the city of Detroit was at the bottom, industry has already moved out. It could've been a Polish mayor, it wouldn't have mattered. Regardless of what I think of Coleman Young, which is not too much. And the union was sort of at the end of its life, as such. When you look back on that period, then I don't want my commentary, what irks you the most about how the, how you felt the workers voted or acted, blacks and whites, let alone other union folks? What would you do different?

D: I don't know how we can instill like I say that kind of loyalty and involvement in all those workers that are in the shops now. They never, ever get involved anymore unless it's a personal thing, something's gonna happen to them or something like that they don't get involved anymore. It all falls back to the same thing. They're set in their ways now, they're gonna ride with the wave now, just like I'm doing getting close to

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retirement. They'll have general elections like they're having in the union and you'll run into the same situation. Black-white vote, you got a choice. You're gonna vote for this, I'm voting for that one. The end result is that they're still gonna hold fast to what's in it for me and, I'm not puttin' that much into it.

But they're still, they're still lookin' out for themselves. That's what they're really doin' now. The loyalty that banded the union together, taking on the big corporation is, in my opinion, nix. It ain't gonna be here no more. We not only have our own locals to contend with that have a power over us, but that can be altered by group activity being united. You have another faction in the hierarchy of the international. They're thinking more and more involvement in the politics of the union, which is good. Because they've never worked politically that didn't happen in time. For the lowers, the working people. But they're more interested in having legislation geared for the protection of working people. They've more or less got out of the habit of what's really being involved at the plants and like I say, going back. Plant conditions are much better now anyways. Maybe they realize this, maybe they don't. They don't really know if they've really gotten better, but they have gotten better. So they assume that it's better so they attack the front differently, politically.

R: What would you like to see them attack politically? National leaders?

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D: Well, in my opinion, if this trend is going for workers throughout the world, I told you this as work, I says, if all these big corporations are trying to make us compete with one another, I says, let them take their corporate headquarters out of this country, go to a different country and establish a corporate headquarters there. Only that form of government that's there, let them maintain their protection rights. Here they have the benefit of everything. They have a government that's been established consistent for 200 years, over 200 years. No more turmoil in this country. One form of government, never been changed, no wars in here except the Civil War when it came up. You probably got the strongest protective army in the world here. If you want those perks, then you better look at the home people first and be part of it. Don't try to go with those other countries for the almighty dollar.

That's the way I feel. If they want to play one with the other, then go to the other country and set your corporate headquarters up there and live that standard of life. That's how I feel.

R: What do you think of GM, what do you think the unions should have done when GM just announced the layoffs of 29,000 people?

D: I think they only, the ones that they announced that they are closing are very, very old plants. Very old plants. You probably remember that they had built two new ones - they razed the one in Poletown and built a manufacturing plant there. One there, one in Orion. Most of those guys they got down there will be absorbed,

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will probably be absorbed. If they got seniority they're gonna be absorbed someplace. Those being old plants, not efficient for modern technology now. Sure, tear 'em down, put new ones up. They'll probably put new ones up. They gotta tear some of these, some of these been old for a long time. They've been there since the beginning of the century, almost. And I can see where they're outdated and outmoded. Like I say, when I worked at Clark Street, which is one of the plants scheduled for closing, plants, inside the plant the floors are still old wooden block, made out of old wooden block that they paved part of Michigan avenue with. The street is still there, done during Depression time. Now that stuff rots after so long, no I think they tore it out. They had a section down there. They had one from Junction up to about Trumbull, somewhere down there. I don't think it's there anymore.

R: If it's right near the train station, they still have it.

D: They still have the station there? Well, that's what that plant, the floor plan of that, a lot of the floors at plants were built with that. So that's an old, old plant.

Yes, it should be tore down. I think they're making manufacturing plants now that are geared for better productivity. It's good, it's being utilized right. We're gonna have less people because of automation. And like I say, these plants that are closing, I don't think they emphasized it a lot in the papers, but I know those people based on a contract are gonna be put someplace. Wherever that may be. They have to make adjustments. Realign. They're gonna be given a job, based on page

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their seniority. The people that are probably gonna lose their jobs are the ones they just hired in these new places that only have a year or two years. That group of people are probably gonna have to go in some different field. Until manufacturing creates something new.

R: You think the UAW should call a general strike of all UAW workers until the corporations do what you said they should? Be responsible to the homefront? Do you think they'd get anyone to support it?

D: Sure. No, no. But that's the way to combat it. I mean all labor, all labor if they wanted, they would have to do that. All labor.

R: Is that in the cards?

D: I don't know.

R: What's in the cards for the truck plant? Still working one shift, 10 hours. Another shifts still laid off. What's in the cards for the truck plant?

D: My feeling is that they're gonna gear that truck plant for another shift if this '87 model is a success. And that's the way I feel because we just make too much money for them not to give us more work in that plant.

R: We make money for them why?

D: We have expertise people working there for all these years. Our equipment is not as modern as most of these other plants. Some areas are getting that way. Our cost factor is probably as low as any manufacturing plant in the country. I know this for a

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fact, a few years back, a friend worked at the scheduling overtime for all manufacturing plants. We, this has got to be four years ago probably, we were the number 1 plant and I don't see anything that changed that. Although somebody said there was, we were gonna close down, but I don't believe that. We would...

(TAPE ENDS HERE, IN MID-SENTENCE)