

BERLIN SCOTT

①

Q How long have you been living here Mr. Berlin Scott?

A About ten or twelve years.

Q About ten or twelve years, were you raised in Detroit?

A Nope.

Q Where were you raised? I thought you were a Detroiter.

A East St. Louis, Illinois.

Q East St. Louis, Illinois, when did you move here?

A In '67, in December, I used to come out here and visit my uncle.

Q And when did you hire in at the Ford Truck Plant?

A 1969

Q '69, what was your first day of work like at the old truck plant, do you remember it.

A It wasn't too rough the first day cause they were showing me alot of things first of all, it wasn't bad the first day like it is now.

Q What do you remember?

A When I first started out at the plant, I started out in paints so it wasn't bad cause they weren't painting but one color then. It was alright then, I mean I enjoyed it then better than I do now.

Q Where do you paint now? What's it like now?

A Two-tone now, it's rough, rough. You know you're just constantly working now, just constantly work.

Q You gotta tell me what it's like, constantly working? Are you working more jobs an hour now?

A Yea, way more, less people.

Q Less people.

A Yea, less people.

Q How many used to be working there?

A There always has been eight in two-tone but I mean we weren't running as many two-tones as we are running now. And they run more production work.

Q And when you hired in well let's take a step back. When you were growing up in East St. Louis, what did your folks do?

A Well my father he worked at \_\_\_\_\_ and decided to well I gotta think, oh man my wife knows I can't remember. We were just common. I always just worked for me.

Q What kind of work?

A I washed cars and we made ashtrays. I would take them out and sell them, flower pots and odds and ends.

Q And how come you moved up here? How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A I got one brother and two sisters. I mean I got two brothers and two sisters. One of them lives in California, one of my brothers, two of my sisters and one of my brothers are still in East St. Louis with my mother.

Q How old is your mom now?

A About 67 or 68.

Q Then you decided to move up to Michigan?

A Well, I started getting into alot of trouble in East St. Louis. East St. Louis is a small town.

Q Tough town isn't it?

A It's not what you would really call tough, but it was just, they had started some radical movements. You know like the

A Black Egyptians.

Q I don't know about that, what was it?

A Well it was just like, well during the time, blacks couldn't go to certain places like in Belleville. You know different things so we just started a movement. We said well we going or we gonna die one of the two. So I got in a lot of trouble, I got in a couple of shoot outs and stuff. The police started bugging my mother. Every time I would come out I would go into jail I would come around my mother. Then she had a stroke. I was talking, well I had a cousin on the police force and he was telling me that they were going to set me up to kill me\_ so he told me maybe it would be best to leave. Now I go back and don't have no problems. I go back now and see some of the same old officers but you know they old now. They off the force.

Q Sure.

A They off the force now, so I go home and don't have no problems. Then I got situated here, I got me a job.

Q I see.

A So I'm still here. I didn't come here with the intention of staying. I came here when I left the penitentiary when I left Jackson. I thought I would come out here and stay with my uncle. So after I got out I went out there and got that job.

Q So to save your neck it made sense to get out of East St. Louis?

A Yeah, East St. Louis is a small town. So everybody knows everybody's business. So everytime I hit the streets, they already know me. So either I'm involved in a stickup or something else so there wasn't no sense in me staying there. I was going to

A worry my mother to death or someone was going to end up killing me. Cause my cousin told me that they gonna kill you and he was on the police force.

Q He was on the police force?

A Yeah and at that time there wasn't that many blacks on the police force. You understand what I'm saying? There was no more than four or five on the force then. (he calls to someone) Miss Bessie, hey Miss Bessie about how many police was on the force back then round about '64 and '65? There wasn't no more than four of them (blacks) on the force. (The person he has called now wants to know what he said). Wasn't no more than about five or six blacks on the force wasn't that many was there? (He starts to call their names but can't remember)

Q But you can count them on your hands?

A You can count them on one hand. I would say about five or six. No more than ten.

Q And when you moved up here and started working at the truck plant were there a lot of blacks in the plant then?

A Quite a few, quite a few.

Q And how were blacks treated in the plant.

A Oh bad place, it was just like leaving East St. Louis. I was going through the same thing. That's why I got the attitude I got today with the plant.

Q What kind of attitude is that?

A I'm still boom you step over this gun, boom you run here you do this you do that. I can stand up there and see this dude

A and after so long the hit dude, the inspector he's so uptight. He's carrying a pencil, it's not just whites it's whites and blacks. But if you had somebody in there that you know, somebody when you first come in you didn't have to do all that work. I don't feel towards it like I did back then but I've had some rough days there.

Q And what was the union doing in 1969?

A Nothing

Q Nothing?

A Nothing, not to me.

Q You've been involved over the years doing different things in the plant with trying to better things. Do you think it's mattered?

A I don't see too much improvement. The little things that we did have going, they started breaking that up. So it went back to the same line again. If we had of stuck with the cause that we was aiming for during that time. All they was worried about was they was coming here from the south and they was making them long checks and making them long hours and as long as they was making that money they don't care how many hours they had to work. When you start talking about cutting that money, then they start drifting away from you. It's just that simple. It's just like that today. They will cry about how tired they are but the man comes and says we will work fifteen hours less but they cry. Don't cry man if you want to stay too. Just go on and do it and keep your mouth shut. They say "Oh I'm

A tired wonder why we working like this? What you mean we?"  
They don't have to stay there no fifteen hours.

Q Some guys work fifteen hours?

A Some work fifteen hours, some work eighteen hours. I've seen some guys work eighteen hours, they didn't have to stay there no eighteen hours so I'm saying so why bitch. Get right back in line and make money. Man come around and told we got two week vacation and everybody is just as happy.

Q You think they are happy with just getting the two weeks?

A When you think alot of them boys come to work are paying over \$600 and \$700 and \$800 housepayments. They got too far in debt. You can't have both have cars, boats and things without getting in debt.

Q You say things haven't changed, what about the employee involvement program? Don't you think what do you think about that?

A Oh man that's what really messed it up to me.

Q How's it done that?

A It put it back into the same old groove again because I'm telling what you doing you're telling what I'm doing how many hours you mess around in there. All they did was start eliminating jobs for people. That was the worst thing that ever came through the plant to me.

Q But a lot of guys like it?

A Oh yeah cause you can walk around off the floor for a couple of hours.

Q I see.

A It's just what I've got covered here. I can go up there and make me a few phone calls and call a few \_\_\_\_\_ up. You cover my job for a couple of hours. I can go down to Louisville and check on something. But the ones that's in it someday they get something out of it. They making it more harder for you cause they don't want to do nothing. I can't get mad at a man if he wants to walk off the floor for two hours but don't go up there and make my job more rougher. You know Scotty, I see him out there smoking, he stands around for fifteen or twenty minutes we can do this or do that. But leave my job alone. If you want to walk around that's good.

Q There's no robots in the paint department.

A Na

Q What do folks on line think about the robots coming in.

A They don't believe they coming.

Q They don't think they are coming.

A No cause they can't. You know we went and seen that film. They can't ever close them doors. Don't strike man.

Q But why doesn't it?

A You been down around them.

Q I know I'm trying to ....

A I do not know, it don't it just don't focus.

Q It's like they are only thinking about making the big bucks for right now. They're not concerned about it.

A Like I told my man I started a computer class. Oh man you don't need to start no computer class just to paint trucks. They don't think nothing is going forward. They up there

A having a big time and things. As sure as things keep going there is a robot coming through there. Hey look it's got to be there. What's the difference between General Motors or Chryslers or anywhere else, they got it. So what makes Ford any difference? Hey you just another tired ass, I'm through with you, you get on back on the road. I mean I got some stuff out there in the car yesterday for seventeen years that solvent that thinner. Hey man this ain't no good for you, this can mess with your liver. Hey man you kidding me, I'm already dead now I been doing this for seventeen years.....I was begging to go see a doctor, go see a doctor now for what. (interviewer laughs) Stop using the thinner for washing you hands, I been washing my hands in thinner for seventeen years. Where have I got. You telling me now seventeen years this was against my health.

Q And that's what they are doing there is no doubt about it.

A Like I told you already, I'm dead already. You must get rid of this whole group and bring your new crew to start this program right now. You might accomplish. If I been washing with this thinner for seventeen years what is the next thirteen going to be.

Q Do you think you will retire?

A No, everybody knows I wouldn't be able to do anything but sit down here in this basement and look around. My wife will tell you man everytime I get home sometime I go to sleep and don't eat. I go to work at six o'clock and don't get out of there til two o'clock the next morning. I ain't been doing no running around all night and coming back home



A When I park my car "Good evening you ready to eat honey"?  
"No" boom I'm asleep. And I'm there til two thirty the  
next morning.

Q And that's what time you get up?

A Yeah

Q And you pick up another person and drive on in?

A And back to the same thing again, you understand?

Q Do you get along with most of the guys on the line?

A Not really, no not really cause well they want to be going  
like well man we going to be doing this. See I don't do  
no favors. I don't do no favors. I'm not going to leave  
off my job like he might be nice to this guy and say why  
don't you go over there and cover. I say well I'm not going  
get the lowest man. And by me being up there and not moving  
they get mad cause I don't go.

Q Yeah

A Well I get along with a few of them. We get along alright  
but like I just say let me do my job you do your job cause  
I ain't doing nothing extra. I'm doing enough as it is of  
the one so I'm not doing no extra. Now if you want to go  
to the bathroom or something I don't mind covering then but  
then you start covering up that man again.....

Q It seem so crowded in there at the plant too.

A It is you are right on top of each other man. That what's  
I'm saying about talking about this health thing yesterday.  
The next man you paint him he paint you.

Q Do you think the plant will be there in ten years?

A It will probably be there. I believe the people might not be there but the plant gonna be there. It might be half the people operating.

Q Why do you think the union has been so not doing much over the last, you been there about fifteen years now?

A Seventeen

Q Seventeen years now.

A I mean what can they do, they pay them just like they pay us. You can only go so far. There is so much they can do let's cut all the bullshit out I can't do this I can't do that. Ford is paying them just like they are paying us. So I ain't going to pay you and you tell me what to do. I might listen to you but you ain't going to tell me when it come down to the bottom line I'm going to sign the bottom line buddy you just there. That's common sense. And there is just so much they can do. So much they can do.

Q Yeah

A As a matter of fact, we ain't got no union no way no more. Not to me man.

Q What do you think a union should do?

A What they should do?

Q Yeah

A A whole lot of things, a whole lot of things they should do. Get people back to work, just get a straight eight hour base. A lot of things man, cut down on some of that slow down. There's lots of things they could do.

Q Share some of them with me, an eight hour day, slow down the line.

A Yeah

Q They are going to speed it up now. They are putting two more Broncos on starting next week.

A They started last week two to one. They want to get three to one but they didn't know if they could work last week. But this week starting tomorrow they gonna see if they can get three Broncos and one truck. Now I got this straight the other day. Bud and them was telling me. But they wanted to try this week but they figured they was down. Cause three Broncos in a row would wipe trim out. Chas over there was telling me about it so they ain't got it cut in there where they can get it through there yet. Cause it's like what he was saying, if they send three Broncos straight through it would wipe trim completely out.

Q Right, right. They're not going to get enough parts in.

A This is what I'm saying. So that's why they are stuck with the two but it's two and one. You understand what I'm saying? Oh man there is a lot of favoritism. Lot of those committee men sell out a lot of people. There's other things the union could do if they had the power, they ain't got the power no more. They don't have no power.....

Q What was that?

A You know when Canada cut loose over here.

Q I see

A Canada, there ain't no sense in me messing with you. Just look around you all weren't doing nothing. All they got to do is just put a dollar sign in front of it and we all get a raise. All get a raise.

Q So you don't think the profit-sharing and the 100% attendance coming in everyday was such a good move?

A No, no. There's a whole lot of people out there in that plant just to make ninety days. There's a whole lot of people in that plant just to get their little forty or fifty dollars whatever they make it. I got one check but it was a check for \$31.00. So what's the sense in me flying down through there trying to get that ninety days for \$31.00? That \$31.00 would have went in the gas tank (interviewer laughs).

Q But you been there seventeen years? How come you stay there?

A Family, bills. I told my wife the other day, I'm thinking seriously about pulling up and moving to California. I know I got to have security for my family but I'm not going to die for my family. Shit we can move down the road and do something else, this job is getting to me man.

Q Tell me about your wife, where did you meet?

A I was down visiting my cousin one time and she came down there.

Q Is she from East St. Louis too.

A Yeah and we started going out and seeing each other.

Q How long you been married?

A It's been well going on six years now.

Q Do you have any children?

A Yeah

Q How old are they?

A Stacy's thirteen, Kim she's fifteen, Linda she's about nineteen. Oh man I don't know their age. My son he just turned nineteen in January.

Q Are they all up here in Detroit?

A No, some of them, a couple of them, three of them here and

A three of them down in East St. Louis.

Q What kind of work, well they are not yet working.

A Well my daughter graduated from nursing and my son is with my mother and the others are still in school.

Q Do you bring home a good paycheck? That's one thing that's powerful about the work in the autoplants is to bring home a decent paycheck. Do you think the kids will be able to have that same kind of economic security?

A No

Q Why not?

A If they don't get into a different line. I don't they will get through no factory you know like I'm getting.

Q Yeah

A Cause like I'm saying the way that automation stuff is coming on through. In the next few years they might have robots like us sweeping the floors. So you know what I'm saying.

Q I think they got a robot coming in now, well it's a big machine to clean the paint booths.

A Yeah

Q A paint booth cleaner.

A There it is so that's what I'm saying.

Q If you sat back and said twenty years from now what do you think the auto industry will look like?

A I believe it will be almost through Rick.

Q Like the Japanese? Or it won't be here at all.

A It will probably be here but I'm just saying it will be through as far as people like us in the next twenty years. If there

A won't be nobody working, who is going to buy the cars? In my opinion they are starting robots and doing this and making things this and started getting themselves out of the water. After you get all this stuff in there, who is going to buy them. Who gonna buy them. Ain't nobody working, how you gonna buy something if you not working.

Q What about all the computer operators and robot operators?  
All the skilled trade guys now sitting there watching the robots?

A One man can watch the whole line. Your elimination is still going. Robots can't buy no trucks and stuff.

Q So why don't folks see?

A They see it Rick they just oh man come on man shit. You know they see it they just don't want to believe it. This is America this can't happen in America. (shit)

Q What can't happen in America?

A We don't lose no jobs or we don't have to worry about not making it. This is the land of plenty here man. Don't let money happen in. We worry about hunger all over the world shoot you thousands of folks starving here so what's the difference in America than there is in any other country? It's just they got a game they run on the people. You know you got a number on freedom. You got freedom of speech, shit, you get out there in the middle of that street and say the wrong thing and see where you will go. As long as you say what I like yeah as long as it's what I like.

Q As a kid you were raised with a view of caring what was going on and standing up. Did your dad or mom sort of give you this

Q sense of fight?

A Yeah, my dad told me if you believe whatever you write that you got to go and the only thing you gonna accomplish something and anything you gonna make a major change or drastic move like my father say, if you ain't ready to die don't mess with it. In order to get piece or some kind of victory you got to shed some blood. That's just the way I am. If you don't want it, just go along with the rest of the crowd. Cause if step forward you gonna have to suffer the consequences whatever that might be. This is the way I look at things. There's got to be something shed for some type of victory to come along. Somebody has to make the move and the people are ready for it.

Q Especially in the auto industry that's the truth. What kind of things do you do when you are not working or not sleeping? That you want to tell us about.

A Not much, just mostly I just sit around. Like I'm saying on the weekend I'm going to stay home on the weekend if I'm not out just messing on the streets or something. I got me a bike so now during the summer I might take my bike out.

Q What kind of bike do you have?

A Me and my wife got us a couple of Elites.

Q What kind?

A Elites, you know them little Elites from down at Honda City. I really don't do nothing. Maybe like a movie or something. Sit around get me a little beer or something. Stay here or go to a couple of friends' house or something.

Q When you were growing up in East St. Louis and knew about the auto industry, did you think about getting a job in the auto plants, did you think about that?

A No I never did, the only thing was when I growd up I was so hot headed. I see my dad he worked for a car dealer but it wasn't no manufacturer, he just worked for himself. He sell cars.

Q I see.

A That's why he pumped in my head for me to go to school but after I got kicked out of school in East St. Louis I was thrown out and couldn't go to school no more. And after I went to St. Charles, I done a little better at St. Charles.

Q St. Charles?

A Illinois State training school for boys right outside of Chicago. Something like reform school. I went there and got a little more knowledge on things. You had to go to school.

Q Sure Sure.

A The things I did years ago, I regret but to me that was the best thing that could have happened to me cause if I hadn't went to St. Charles, I probably would have been dead today. There's alot of things that folks was telling you, you was listening but you weren't reading. And some of the same things I was getting in trouble for I see was a better way than what they was telling me they was. We was in different Gangs like the Gibson I was telling you about. So it helped me. It gave me a different on life. It ain't no such thing as you holding me down but it's the system you know and don't buck the system. You can sit down and talk to people, do a little reading. I couldn't even get in front of a crowd and talk.

Q What amazes me at the plant is at Christmas time, people will be working double extra overtime then spend lots on Christmas presents.

A And if you notice, that's the way they got the contract set up. Now Christmas is our tradition, the kids got up the tree, we got to have a turkey or something on the table. We got to buy gifts and things and you getting too close to Christmas to talk about whether maybe we ought to strike. Man they brreak their



A necks getting over there ratifying them contracts. Man if we strike now I got all this stuff put up for Christmas what would I do. That's a lot.

Q What was Christmas like when you were a kid? Do you remember a particular Christmas that you really liked?

A All of them man all of them. I was living just as well then as I am now. I ain't going to say we ate the best I never did see no hunger then and I never did go ragged you understand. We kept warm. (his child interrupts and wants to know if they are going riding today, father answers and child says that father will have to help him get out the bike) As a child I enjoyed a lot of things that I wouldn't want to go over but I think I would enjoy again.

Q What are some of the things you enjoyed I see a little smile. What are you thinking about?

A Like me and my father we had a good understanding. We could sit down and we could talk. He would tell me different things, it don't matter what color a man is. It ain't never been no prejudiced thing with me, it don't make no difference. I don't look at you as white and me as black. Hey if you my friend, you my friend. I wouldn't care if I went to Timbucktwo I may come over. Don't mess with him. Like he told me way back then they say you colored you gonna have friends different colors.

Q Did you have white friends when you were a kid?

A Heck yeah. I have more white friends than black friends because we get to talking and they say you don't look at things this way. Then a lot of them go on different movements. Like David Goldberg, Joe, Ed travel a lot. We travel together. I talk to Jerry but we not as close as we used to be cause he's not working right now. So I would say that he was the best friend I got.

Q When you're raising your own kids, do you feel you are able to bring the same kind of value to them?

A Yes I have.

Q What do you think your daughter will do when she finishes high school?

A Well if she keep on the way she doing now, I think she will do pretty good. Right now I take up a lot of time with her. One of her classes she took she was number five out of the states. I'm kind of tight on her. We ain't going to watch T.V. all day. We gonna get this work done cause that's the name of the game. The t.v. and stuff you can do later.

Q The soaps aren't on from three o'clock?

A No we don't do that and she knows that. We learned this coming up. Get your education, get out and mingle and go to different places, Go to different functions where people talking and stuff. I don't go with her alot of time but her mother take her or drop her off and stuff like that.

Q You been living in Detroit since '69 right?

A No I came to Detroit back in when they made that movie about me when I got out of prison.

Q Made the what?

A That movie out there at Novi. Didn't you know about that picture?

Q No

A Yeah they came down to New York you know the job....and the changes I have made from the time they was going over my things. It last about twenty minutes.

Q Take a step back, I don't know about this.

A Oh it was just like I had changed from a lot of things I was doing. So they tried to get in touch with me in East St. Louis so they found out I was here.

A So when they got in touch with me here, we made it out there at \_\_\_\_\_ steel in Novi. We was making boxcars. They asked me what bring the change in me and how come I ain't like I was then just lots of stuff. What the change I made I had a good job. So they brough a bus and started filming when I got on the bus. Do I think I would stay right or do I think I would go back into doing different things again. When I wasn't working I had all this leisure time, I would sit out and think of all this stuff to do.

Q Sure, Sure. So you did a film. Was it on t.v.?

A Yeah, they seen it in East St. Louis.

Q Did you ever show it to thekids?

A No, I ain't never seen it.

Q You never seen it?

A I've never seen it.

Q It would be great to show to the kids.

A Someone from New York come down and took it. No I never seen it but alot of people here in Detroit have seen it. Cause I was in the store one day me and my wife and someone said hey you the fella that had the welding helmit and a piece of steel. Yeah I have never seen it Rick, My mother she has seen it. My brother out in California and my uncle out in Washington seen it. Cause when we had it down at the reunion when I took Leo he said here's the movie star.

Q This was done when, when was this done?

A '64 when I came home, '64 or '65.

Q So that was before the rebelling started? It was right after the march in Washington in '63 and Martin Luther King.

A They had been trying to catch me after I left St. Charles but I started moving around because I got a lot of awards in St. Charles.

Q Were they in skill development, the vocational training you were getting there?

A Yeah, see when I first went there I wouldn't do anything, I wouldn't do nothing. I started fighting and I stayed in the cell most of the time. You know they had just a little cell. At St. Charles you had cottages, you didn't have no bars on your windows and stuff like that and I stayed in the cell most of the time and wouldn't do no work.

Q How long were you there?

A In St. Charles man almost fifteen months. I kept breaking the rules.

Q You been a rebel your whole life?

A No not really.

Q I'm not saying that's bad.

A I been thinking for myself that way.

Q O.K. alright. So you were at St. Charles, then you moved up here, you moved around for awhile?

A Yeah I left there and I went to Omaha, Nebraska got ran out of Omaha they kept me in jail til the bus came in so that's when I went to Tocomo, Washington. They got me out of jail at night and put me on greyhound bus so I went out to Tocomo and stayed with my uncle out there. So I got out there and went to jail. So I left there and went to Othella, Washington. It was harvest so I started picking peaches and stuff like that. I got tired of that and went to Las Vegas. I did pretty good in Las Vegas then my father took sick. So I had to go back to East St. Louis. A year and half later, no I came here and he died while I was here.....so I came on back and that's when I started they got me for murder. I was in Fort Rouge and they sent to East St. Louis to pick me up for murder so I had to go back there and stay -----months til they had my trial. First time I got ready to go to trial that's when

A Mr. King got killed. Second time I was getting ready to go to trial Robert Kennedy got killed so for me going up for murder, my lawyer would tell me this ain't the right time. So I went on to trial I got found not guilty so I came back and my job at Rouge that's when I went to the truck plant.

Q When you first moved to Detroit, what's been some of the changes in Detroit that you think about during the last twenty years? It's been twenty years hasn't it?

A Yeah about twenty years. Oh Rick.

Q You gotta pick your brain brother. When you moved to Detroit where did you live, you didn't live here. Which side of town did you live in.

A When I first moved into Detroit, I was staying right over there on twelvth and Penguin. When I first moved here. Well my unclè was staying on 16th. street but like I say I had some friends that I hadmet. So Eugene Harley was living on 12th. and Franklin. So I was here for a couple of days and I started looking him up and I found him so I went on and started living with him. My uncle still living over there now. He's still on 16th street.

Q What does he do?

A He repairs t.v.s, he got his own little shop.

Q Well Detroit must have been a big coming from East St. Louis. East St. Louis is a small town, was it mostly black mostly white. Well right now East St. Louis is mostly black. It was . After most of the stores started moving out in December, it's mostly dominated by blacks.

Q But when you lived there it was mixed?

A It was mixed quite a bit, mixed then. Like I say they started all those different movements and things and the stores and they started moving out.

Q So you lived over on 14th?

A No on 12th.

Q 12th. then the rebellions came in '67.

A Yeah I was over there during that time.

Q Were you?

A Yeah

Q Were you working in the plant then? You were at Paragon Steel then?

A Yeah, no I was at.....cause the night we came in it was something like a Thursday night or Friday night or something.....

Q Do you think Detroit's in better shape now than it was when you moved here?

A No, not to me.

Q What do you mean?

A I've seen a few improvements. I ain't really seen no drastic changes. I don't know man. I lot more could be done I'll put it that way. A lot more could be done. Like I say, I seen something but it ain't enough to turn no flip about. They got along ways to go yet before you know what I'm saying. You still got a lot of people around here homeless, more people starving. Maybe I didn't know this at the time I got here. I ain't seen as many houses boarded up as I see now. Lot of people losing their homes. So I can't really see no hell of a change. Not to me maybe to someone else can I'm saying not to me.

Q Sure, sure. Do you let's see what you want to talk about. What kind of work is your wife doing now.

A She's an R.N.

Q What hospital does she work at. Does she work in a hospital.

A Yeah downtown on Woodward. I don't know the name of it.

Q Detroit Osteopathic on Woodward near the library.

A Yeah.

Q My friend is working there, he's an electrician. He's been working there for a while. You must make 50 or 60 grand. 50 grand this last

Q year?

A No I make more than that.

Q More than that?

A About \$79,000 or something.

Q \$79,000, that's more than all your relatives combined, but you don't think it's worth it?

A No

Q What do you do with it, \$79,000 is alot of money. You should be a friend of Ronald Regan almost. What do you do with \$79,000.

A Spend it. If I don't I have to give it back to the government anyway. That's why I don't work like I do out there it wouldn't benefit me. ....

Q Do a lot guys take medicals.

A Yes sir (person laughs)

Q What percentage of the guys?

A Half, oh man. They go out of there everyday. They say things like my shoulder hurts.

Q What's the hardest thing about working on the line?

A Hey man, the hassel, the hassel, the more you do you still don't do enough. You understand what I'm saying.

Q But you do a good job. Everybody on the line will always say that Scotty does good work. I never heard anybody say.....light paint I never heard anything like that.

A I do my job until after lunch. The first five six or seven hours eight hours, I'm cool. But after eight hours man I start getting tired. After you been there four hours you done did eight hours worth of work compared to other jobs.

Q What do you think you will do when you get out, you think you might just pick and go one day?

A I'm thinking seriously about it now Rick. Because the other day I told my wife

Q You would give up your retirement, you would give it all up.

A It ain't going to do me any good no way. If I stay there another thirteen or fourteen years I'm gonna be dead anyway it ain't gonna benefit me. It might benefit my wife.

Q She might be pretty lonely. So what do you think you might do?

A I don't know I'm debating on it buddy, I'm debating about it seriously on it. Thinking about it seriously.

Q I'm thinking about getting out. One of the reasons I'm writing the book maybe it will sell a lot of copies then we will all have a big party. But one of the reasons of writing the book is sort of a going away present. I mean I don't want to look back in ten years and say that plant and my son says what was it like there and all I can remember is the back ache or something like that. I want to remember the people I worked with and the stories and what my life was like. Cause otherwise it's pretty depressing place. Do you talk about work much to your family.

A No, no. I be so tired we very seldom talk. You know like people come home and say hi honey how was your day , hey I don't want to talk. It's not my wife, it's just the attitude that I have. I have an hell of an attitude. If my wife didn't understand me, my wife couldn't stand to be around me. That job keeps me so uptight. It keeps me too uptight. As far as my family we be cussing and hollering and falling out it ain't about that. Hey man we walk around this house and don't say nothing. I be just that quiet and lots of times I don't have to say nothing. Cause when I come in I'm gone to sleep and like when she get off well I'm already asleep. Me and mother talk more than me and my wife do.

Q Your mother?



A No I mean my mother-in-law.

Q Your mother-in-law.

A So me and her really talk more than my wife and I. Cause I sees her like if I get in while I'm eating or something maybe we will sit there and that won't be more than a ten or fifteen minute conversation then I'm gone again.

Q Did you use to work the afternoon shift?

A Yeah

Q What was that like? What hours did you work then?

A Oh man that was still

Q When you were first hired, you worked afternoons?

A I hired in on afternoons.

Q Tell me what the day was like. A lot folks don't know what it's like so what was it like.

A Well

Q What time did your time start?

A We would go in like 5:30. I think it was 5:30 if I ain't mistaken and then you there til the next morning. You leave in the daylight and get home lay down get up then it's time to go back again. It's just been an up and down thing with me eversince I really been there. It's been just work work, work. And I was working hard then but it wasn't half as rough as it is now.

Q Maybe it's because your are older.

A No man I'm talking about the work.....I'm doing twice as much work. Well almost twice as much work.

Q Do you get ten minutes an hour break?

A Yes, ten minutes an hour.

Q How come they give your guys more break than the rest of the line. The rest of the line gets six minutes an hour you get ten.

A Maybe it's because we painting or something. Well they be working this hard on prime, well prime they gets ten minutes off. I guess that's one of the union like we get that thirty minute \_\_\_\_\_time and nobody else gets it. To clean the paint off the hands. I guess that's a thing between the union and the company. They could give you fifteen or twenty minutes on the hour:the way they be sending those trucks down through there. They wouldn't be giving you too much.

Q What do you have planned for vacation coming up?

A Oh man nothing really, maybe do a little work around the house.

Q Did you do the work in the basement here? Or did you have it done?

A Yeah I had it done. I didn't do it. I be too tired to do anything. Shit I went to paint and it took me six months to paint.

Q It's real nice, I like the wood in the basement. So you have it fixed up nice with the bar, do you have a lot of parties here.

A Hey man I fixed this up just for me. Like on the weekends I come down here just me. I like to be down here just by myself. This is my enjoyment right here. This is my spot. All the time I bring my t.v. down here sit around here.

Q Your family is going to church this morning?

A Yeah, they getting ready.

Q You're not a church goer?

A No, no

Q Does that cause hassel in the family that you don't want to go.

A No, I don't stop them from going. I went over there one time and I told them don't ever ask me to come back over there no more. I'm singing one song man they turned the page and I'm still on the first page singing and they got disgusted in there.

Q If there was one message you wanted to give your kids, what's that message? What could you share that your dad told you. What kind of message would you like them to hear from you.

A Well, I would want them to get education where I didn't get and I would want them to get involved in different movements as much as you can to help other people that you see that or figure they need help. Join some of the struggles and don't be afraid. Whatever you think if you think it's right speak up on it. Don't be ashamed cause you know you gonna make mistakes but the greatest men in the world made mistakes. Cause you make a mistake you don't give up. If the road get rough, don't give up. Hang in there, get the best life you can.

Q Let's take a little move to things happening in the world. I know you love to talk about politics. Ronnie Regan, what's happening in Libya. What do you think, I'm amazed still working on the trim line everybody around me was ready to blow up Libya or take it over as another 51st state. What do you think about what Ronald Regan has been doing.

A Well I admire Kadafi. I admired him because he do not bow to the United States of America and I always have been a radical and to me he is a radical. I admire him more than I do Regan.

Q Tell me about that, what do you respect about him?

A Because he's a man, he's a man. Hey United States you ain't no better than any other country. Don't you mess with me. They know the United States could blow it off the map in one day but the man say you show me what you gonna do to me cause I won't put it out there for you to do it. The man to run a country now, the man can't be no total fool. About him being such a radical something wrong with him, he crazy that's what they are saying. He saying well leave me alone But whatever you gonna do to me don't tell me about just show me you gonna do it. But I will bring it to

A you, I will bring it to you.

Q Do most of the guys on your line agree with you?

A No, no. Alot of them are mad cause like I say I admire him and I do admire him, I do admire him. Out of all the politics, he's my number one man. He always has been, he always have been.

Q Do you find that blacks anymore than whites have any different kinds of views on that?

A No, no. Just blow him up. That's it, that's it man. They Scotty they something wrong with you.

Q What about Sheriff Lucas? The Wayne County Commissioner?

A He ain't worth two dead flies. Not to me. Not to me.

Q He's a black man to run for governor.

A No, he's just a black man whose going to go out there and mess up something. That's all he's going to do. It just ain't his time, you understand what I'm saying. It's not his time. Look at all the programs and stuff he's doing now, there ain't no black in his right mind that's going to go out there and vote for this fool.

Q I don't know. No black in his right mind.

A That's what I'm saying. But we also got a tendancy to cry when time for election to come we do just the opposite anyway. As long as they ain't running for nothing they tired of the people in there but time they run they get right back in there. So they ain't looking for no change. The same ones .....man I can't wait til election and they put the same ones back in there. We don't want no change we want things to stay just like it is but we just cry. I'm tired and when the times change your work will stay the same. So you put the same ones back in there and they start the same crying back again. Well you voted for him at election time. So what's going to make any difference now. So you have three or four more years to cry again. But the next time comes he right back through the door again.

A So you don't want no change. Can you keep these ten hours going, can you keep these five, six, seven days a week going that's all they want. That's the name of the game.

Q Do you think our plant will be working six days ten hours more years in the future?

A No I can't see.

Q What do you think folks will do? When they start being cut back?

A A lot of them might kill themselves, really alot of them might kill themselves. A lot of people at the plant use to making that type of money. Man you go many places and tell them you work at the truck plant and you don't have to worry about getting no credit. I don't need credit. I can only spend so much and you can only do so much. Cause buddy ten hours a day you know you gotta be there to keep just what you got. So what's the sense me start accummulating stuff that I can't enjoy. Like if I had a big mobile home I get off on Friday evening I got to park it back here on Sunday morning. So it's sitting here, and there ain't but one day a week that I can enjoy it. That's sad. So getting all these things you can't enjoy still don't make sense to me. I ain't gonna get a little Toyota get me a motor boat and stuff. What am I gonna do when winter comes? My ski boat be stored. So that's what I'm saying. If they cut out the hours it wouldn't bother me cause my whole thing.....if I can't pay my bills I tell my wife just put it back up cause we can't do this. I don't keep judging on these 60 hours a week cause this ain't gonna last. We working ourselves right on out of a job. It ain't gonna continue doing this for the next fifteen or sixteen seventeen years. But you don't want to admit it. I can't see it. It might be around but I just can't see it.

Q I'm amazed at how much folks can spend. One of the guys I work with, he just bought some land in Irish Hills a couple lots and start building his little log cabin that was for three thousand dollars. Another guy just bought

Q a fifteen thousand dollar boat.

A That's what I'm saying. So what are you going to do about a boat, if you don't pay for it, so you got the work to pay for it. You can put down a hell of a down payment. You ain't going no where, working and giving it back.

Q O.K. Scotty I'm ready to listen to you what do you want me to do?

A Go down to eight hours, quit all that overtime business, quit jumping around from job to job. The plant's so messed up I can't even think of it all. I get mad when I start thinking about it. Really I don't like to discuss. I don't like to discuss my job period. When I leave there man I don't want to discuss it. Like I told my wife don't ever ask me anything about the Michigan Truck Plant. Cause when I leave I'm through. That's just the way I think. When it come down to how we talking now not trying to be funny with you that's just the way I think..... The police stopped me the other morning about three o'clock and say where you heading to I say I work at the Michigan Truck plant out in Wayne. And you going to work at this time of the morning and I say buddy it might sound funny but that's where I'm going I got my lunch in the back seat. Cause one of my headlights was out. That's what he stopped me for cause my head light was out. I said well I was going to work. That man looked at me like hey I didn't know you were going to work at this time of the morning. We taling three o'clock in the morning you understand what I'm saying.

Q Sure, Sure

A And I was onmy way to work.

Q You start at three in the morning?

A No by the time I pick up Joe and I pick up Al we get out there about quarter to five in the morning. Or something like that. Like I said I drink me a coffee and get myself together. I just can't come in and go