

SHARPE, LORENZO

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Q Where are you going for vacation and how long are you gonna be down there?

A I'm gonna down to Cuba and I'll be down there 2-3 weeks.

Q When was the last time you were there?

A About two years ago.

Q You'll be down in Cuba. Is your family still there?

A Half of my family is still there.

Q When did you leave? How did you end up at the Michigan Truck Plant?

A I use to work for a neighbor and when he had problems in Cuba and they cut the water line off then they decided to lay off the civilians and I was afraid to get laid off so I decided to come. They asked me if I wanted toand I said sure do cause that was my intention anyway, because I didn't want to stay on the base and I stayed on the base for awhile and then I came here. I came here to Michigan, first I went to Chicago and I didn't like Chicago. My brother works in Chicago and it's like cold. And then I tried to get a job at GM only they weren't hiring. A friend of mine, he died, but before he told my brother he could get me a job, so he went and got me an application.

Q When did you come to the Michigan Truck Plant?

A August 1965.

Q You were there when it started pretty much?

A Mostly when it started. I worked when I first started the second shift.

Q What was it like the first day for you? Do you remember?

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A It was kind of rough, cause I never worked on a line before. And it was kind of hard to get adjusted. I just started to work and then the days started to go by. It was no problem for me anymore.

Q What kind of job did you get when you got hired?

A I started as a ark and gas welder.

Q An ark and gas welder? What does that mean? What did you do?

A Welding. Using an ark machine, which is the one that you a pilot light when you're welding and the gas was a propane torch and you got a base, brash and you know that's what you call a gas...

Q It was a skilled job too?

A It was a skilled job, I didn't have a skilled job because whenever you working with gas and ark that is a great job, rather than the production job. Where you make more per hour than the regular assembly worker because of the classied job. You make like a few penny less than the, but you make than a regular assembly worker on some of the classifications.

Q Those are the jobs that are automated. Those are the ones the robots do?

A No. They still have gas welder. No gas welder now just hot water. I don't think they came up with the robot to do something like that. They probably could but I don't it.

Q What's the different between ark welding and gas welding?

A Well, gas welding is like you laser like and ark welding is something that goes on by itself. All you got to do is put the gun down there and hold it a certain height and move your hand. The gas welding is

you got to open the torch, make a flame and get the rod and heat the steel and ...

Q I see. That's why you used to wear the masks?

A Ark welding is where you wear the masks and gas welding you don't wear a mask you wear a certain kind of dark glasses.

Q Okay that's gas welding, so they do a lot of repairs. Okay now I know. You started in the body shop? How long did you stay there?

A I stayed there seven years and then I went into QC.

Q Quality control?

A Yes, quality control. I was in QC until around the first part of the year. Then I went back to gas welding and I was, at the time, utility. I was gas utility and when I went back they said I was gone to far and then they wanted me to learn the job of back up utility job. And they wasn't doing it so I got mad and I went to work . It was to bad, the safety and I got sick and I couldn't take the smoke and stuff they had there was so good.

Q In the body shop?

A Sure do. So I got sick and went on a medical.

Q This was in 1984?

A 1984.

Q Now the job you have is checking and adjust. Why don't you take a few minutes and explain that. Is that a new job concept.

A And that is a new job classification. Well, checking and adjust they came up with a job that they incorporated it with operations, supervisor and everything to make the job work. It's a good program if it's worked right. It will be awhile before they get around to cause

there is still alot of things that have to be done in the plant. Like another job would need to be relocated. Another job is kind of over loaded, some are light and some are overloaded. What we do is like say an operator is having a problem and can not do something, say we find out what his problem is on the line. We solve the problem. We solve the problem right then.

Q I see you all over the department, doing lots of different jobs sort of Johnny on the spot, taking care of business.

A Sometimes you might have somebody who don't tell you when they're doing something. And then we might follow the line through so we can catch it before it gets off the line.

Q Who used to do that job then?

A They didn't use to have that job before. This is new, they come up with that the first part of the year, maybe a little before summer right? Well, we started about in March or April.

Q No even a year yet in the program.

A Right, not even a year old. I think they had to decide to come up with something like that to get quality.

Q Why? How does that help quality?

A Because the problem we are having with quality is sometimes things are going on the line and maybe the peerman might not be able to get it. Get out on the line, get out on the field, get out to the customer. We've been there and attacked the problem right in the line, get it there before it get's out of hand. I get out in the field.

Q Can you give me an example? Can you think of any time out in the line when you've had some problems and you've been able to check it in.

A Well, like okay. I work on the doorlocks and I want to check them in and the pull latches. They use to have when I started, that's the job they had when I started when I left the body shop. Putting in the door locks and they was having I don't know the highest percentage of warranty and it went down completely because when I went there they told me that I was the one that was messing up because I was new on the job. And then I found that they were having a problem there for years. With catch, lock and rod and locks were no good. So I had to decide what was the problem. We got together with the parts and we found out where the problem was and then we corrected it and they is doing alot better. This is what they are doing. They want everybody to check the lock. Really I am the only one when they have a problem, I get the lock and look at it and I'll find the problem and show them the problem with the lock. Hourly, supervisor or anybody that wants to see in the plant. So what they have lately, when they have a bad lock over in the garage or in the yard they'll send me and I'll go there and open the door. Look and see what the problem is, maybe change the chain or there's a clip missing. I'll change the chain or fix it and make it go to the right place to fix it. Especially with the power lock it has more attachments to it than the regular door lock.

Q Yeah...

A One, two ...you got four rods with a power lock which is hanging down, which is what puts the power lock up and down.

Q Before they use to blame the worker when they had bad luck?

A Well, I don't know about that. I know they tried to blame me cause I

was new on the job, you know. That I was messing up and that the problem wasn't on the line. And I know it wasn't me. Then the problem was...

Q The thing with quality, you do charts I know. So they eliminated inspectors, alot of inspectors probably 60% of the inspectors?

A Well, I don't think it was 60%. But then they eliminated quite a few of them.

Q They replaced...The quality didn't go up just because they cut back inspectors.?

A No it didn't.

Q So now they instituted the checking and adjustments? And do you see that quality has changed in the last?

A Well I think it's changed. And I think we've seen more improvements is because you've had a major change over. When you have a major change over, I tell you why. When I started working here there was a major change over, which is roughly when they started making the first Broncho.

Q That's in 1965?

A That's in 65 when they first started to make the Broncho, okay and we had a major change over in 65 which completely changed the body and you have these new engines, that they run them on all the time now. You have alot of changes. The next time you have a major change over you are gonna find the problem with the fly wheel with the quality. You know what they'll doing right. You have alot of new parts here which is hard to...alot of new parts.

Q Do you find as an hourly employee that you're pretty respected and

involved in the process of talking with the engineers. Not like it was in 1965?

A In 65, I used to talk to them, but I didn't have their... I tried to talk to them, but like now because I meet all of them, I'm see all of them and when they come around and there's a problem, I go right there and show them the problem is exactly what it is.

Q Do yo think they're listening?

A They listening now. Some of them won't, but they're listening now. Because they know they got to listen. 'Cause their jobs depends on our job, you see what mean?

Q No. Say a little more.

A I said their job depends on our job, because hey if we don't do work they don't decide for us to do good, and we don't do good, and they quality go down and stop selling trucks, we don't have a job, they don't have a job. It take both of us; we and them to work together to get quality out. You know everybody got to do something a little of their part to get quality out.

Q That's a new concept this team quality.

A Yea. And if we have quality, we gonna be selling things. The people not gonna buy, uh, vehicle, if they're not quality made. So everybody know what this quality is and want this quality made. It's not like... When somebody buy a car and got stuck with it because it's no good, they take it back and after so many days in the dealer, hey, he'd have to pay for it and the company got stuck with it, so that's why they concerned about giving the customers quality.

Q Why do you think the quality was not looked at for so long?

A Well, ah, it's a lot of things to it. Okay? I think most of all our quality is been the problem. Because the thing to them is ship anything there and they was using them where we're on solid spot okay, run it, they didn't want to stop the line. Don't hold the production, run it. It was the note to the customers you know and you know, customers are having problem. But it's got a point where they realize that really is causing this problem in quality. And that's why you know when they a problem they bring to me. They will send good part and in month or two time they gonna ship that junk that they reject and try to get some of it in here, because they don't want to lose it. So we got to keep on them. I keep an eye on them when they're... We got a lot of junk in there, we call them. Like yesterday we had a problem, we had some bad looms, power looms, they are hard shell is what the connection and couldn't hook it up, it was the wrong one.

Q We had it with the rubber insulation on the back.

A And I had to change them from the regular loom, power loom, you know the speaker loom. I had to go over there and change them and put them on. And then, right by the time I looked, they had the man sorting them. And they give him all the bad ones then, you know.

Q Same day?

A Same day. Right. Which we didn't have that for years. See and when they have to do that, it cost them more money, they won't try to put quality in the plant.

Q That's also part of the just-in-time service of parts.

A Right. You have to be careful when the operator have a problem with a

part like that. They check it and don't know why you can't hook it up. It look, you see, it's a problem there, she can talk to supervisors about that. They reject their calls, and they call... It used to be Coco's (?) office. They called down there and they come out and tackle it. They send it back to the vendors, the companies who are making it. They have them come in there and research what they have in the system.

Q What has been the response from most of the guys and the few women who work on the line? Are they cooperative with this program? With the concern for quality?

A Well, I'll tell you what.

Q What do you think, 'cause you get around?

A I don't know what to say, but I see some them as they not cooperative, some of them will, and some of them don't. You know? So what I've seen, some of them don't. Some of them will. Alot of them will. And some of them is getting to where they know they have to cooperate. But I think what happened, they don't understand that they got to do quality and do the best they can today.

Q Why do you think they don't do it?

A Well, I guess they don't know what, what's happening lately in the future in the auto industry. They see if you're not quality, and when the big company won't compare in the market. He's said no body...

Q That's the bottom line?

A Yea. Nobody gonna pay twenty thousand dollars for a vehicle and have a piece of junk they have to run it back and forth to the dealer.

Q That's what these trucks cost, twenty thousand dollars?

A Not the trucks, the Broncos cost twenty thousand and more than twenty thousand too. And people's buying them, why, because they, they like them, they making them good. I think it's one of the best, not the best, but the best looking four wheel drive out there on the road today, is the Ford Bronco. Compare to the Blazer, the Jimmy, the Bronco II, the Dodge Ram, the Cherokee, it's none of them look like a Bronco. I don't know if you have looked at them on that...

Q Yea I do.

A I work for Ford, but there's no comparison. It's no F model, is no F model. If we put the right quality in there, not even the Japanese would out sell us.

Q The Japanese aren't really competing with the trucks.

A No.

Q That's one of the things that make us.

A Most of our problem, have been the vendor problem. I'm gonna tell you something now, say you have a bad operator and a good operator, say the bad screws five screw maybe in a panel or something like that, the good suit, five screws. If you give the good five bad screw with a suit five bad. If you give the good, five good screws, you gonna screw five good screws. See that's where your vendor problem comes in. A lot of time is bad parts that they have. I've seen them there.

Q What have been some of the most glaring parts that were so terrible you can't believe they even made it into the plant, if you think the stupidity of the vendors.

A The parts that are bad?

Q Yea, when there just really so... They just try to sneak in junk.

A Well, they try to sneak in junk, and they, okay, they suppose to make the parts lost () are a year. Okay being it's such a sharp period of time, they want to make it so that they just lost a little bit more than twenty () or one year, that they put such a cheap warranty into it that they stay on the system. They come ready, but they decline. When you install it, it don't function.

Q Which ones wouldn't function?

A A lot of them. A lot of them.

Q Such as, which part would you say?

A A lot of the electronic parts that come in there.

Q Electronic parts?

A Yes. A lot of them. Power loom, um, you know the loom, the main loom that holds this thing, it have a lot of parts that not put together right, they don't...

Q Explain what a loom is.

A A loom is... Main loom is all your wiring; your harness wire and they go circulate to the trunds from your head lights, your windsheild wiper, washer, radio, door locks, ignition key, blinkers, you know turn signals, it's a lot of things that when you call main loom.

Q So when that messes up, you got some serious problems.

A If you got two or three wire in main wiring messed up, you have a serious problem. And it's the building block, because they have them where they'll catch fire too.

Q Really?

A Sure do. They'll catch on fire. Pick up a bad shock that's in there, it can catch on fire. So this is what I'll tell you is a major concern is getting the vendor then to ship the right parts. That complicate us since we had the steel company we have a few problem with them. We have the men who have the skills, they go into body shop and check them and make sure, and we show them how to build them, how to make them. Because the way they was making them, they was falling apart. So that when they redesigned and bring it in, and we did like all the other operators did, was hit it in his hand to get it secure it, and it didn't come apart like all this, so they take it back so I talk to him. I said there's a error, and tell them what's the problem and what it is. They said they was gonna do the best to see if they...

Q Who is we, who sit down with vendor? You, yourself.

A Well sometime I talk with them, you got Walt.

Q Another hourly employee?

A Yes. He's the one that check a lot out the wiring. He conduct the E.I. meeting, and he pick out a report of the different line and he feed them back to management and he and Reed work together, got Charlie doing something. They chart them you know.

Q Reed is running the computers he works just the hourly day now?

A Reed is on the computer, yea?

Q They work together. You know it's amazing, people's image of an auto worker is only someone working on the line like a robot. And that's not you...

A You know the engineer, they have, they're the patient, but you have

operator that have the knowledge as engineer or maybe more. Because he working everyday with the parts. When he have a defective part, the operator can tell you have a defective part quicker than engineer. And that operator can look at part and tell engineers they won't work. Because he's the one working with it everyday, he knows what gonna work and what's won't work.

Q Four or five hundred times a day?

A Yea they had, what do you call that problem where, um the remote, remote hand, remote handlers, there's a door handle that lift up your... You know you have to open up your door from the inside. Your load is a little small part like this, the handle is secured to the remote. That pull the rack from the door lock and open the door. And they have problem with it when they first launched. And I told the engineer what's the problem. Now when they put it together for the door handler, when they opened it, it was scratching hitting the door panel and scratching. That means it... So the come over there with all kind of things and gauges and I told 'em, I said just get a department, I said you're holding this too far that the hole is too far in front, you had to bring it back a little more. And they finally decided to listen to me and they bring it back, now the problem is all gone. I talked to one of the guys and they said no, the problem went away. But, if they would've listened to me from the beginning, hey, they did'nt go to the problem. Yea, I don't like to them paid from the plant from Mexico where they had the E.I. program and stuff like that and they said that the best engineer that they had in the plant is the operator, which is true.

Q Talking about Mexicans. Most of those looms come from Mexico, right?

A I don't know where... I know the door glass, that is made in Mexico. I don't know where the loom is made, I never check and see where they're made now. They real loom and the F model, United Tech, I think that's in the United States. And the power loom I think is here at United Tech I think it's made here. I don't think the loom is made in Mexico. I think the windshield is made in Mexico.

Q A lot of the plastic paneling, the inside paneling. The reason I was raising it is, is one of the other areas in trim is that a lot of folks wear the T-shirts that say Buy American Buy What You Build, yet we assemble parts that are coming from Mexico or even on line 2 the brake cylinder, the master cylinder comes from Japan. That sort of thing.

A I was the one that described that first. When we had that lunch, and um, we lost ten Broncos and twenty F jobs. Welding line was looking and I saw a computer from Japan, and I said see, this is a problem we have right here. They claim that the Americans, that we make bad cars and trucks, but hey we just put them together, we don't make the parts. It's not the truck falling apart, it's the parts that's falling apart. And I look, I said hey, see this coming from Japan. It's not the American workers making it, it's the Japanese making it. And now it say () on the inside and Japan on the outside. I was the first one that's caughts that. I'm very close, I've had a look at it. The products come from Mexico, hey, we don't build it, we just put them together. In one way, a lot of people that I don't say nothing about, okay, they making parts in Mexico, they buy trucks from us too. So

they protects our job. I can see Japanese, they won't trucks from us, because the Japanese out there say our trucks are so expensive over there that the Japanese don't want to buy it. And they tell them not to buy them. So, I don't complain like Canada, hey, we make trucks in Canada. Canadian's buy trucks and buy cars from us, why should I get mad because the parts are made in Canada.

Q So you feel it's a pretty fair deal?

A Right, because hey, they buy trucks and Broncos and everything from us too. So I don't think, um, we should feel that way about it. But how I feel about the Japanese and them, they won't buy it, and they put the price up so high, so that their people will not buy American products. You have Japanese that drive Cadillac or Lincoln. Those rich people have money in Japan, they don't drive no Japanese car, they drive Lincoln and Cadillacs, they drive big cars, so I seen those people, you know. But yet they want to tell them to buy, you know, smaller cars. And I don't see where the Japanese, you know where a major problem is in the auto industry?

Q Where?

A The dealers.

Q Explain. Why do you think the dealers?

A Okay, the company gives the dealer a warranty. But they do not apply it to the customers. Say I go there and buy say a truck okay? And the truck hava problem, a major problem from the factory. And I take it in and that dealer will give me the go around for twelve months or for twelve thousand miles. And after it expire, here I'm stuck with something that the company give it them, but the dealer never fix it.

Q I don't understand? I understand that the dealer gives the customer a one year or twelve thousand mile...

A Yea, but a lot of time they don't fix the problem as though they should.

Q Oh when you bring it back?

A When you bring it back.

Q They put a bandaaid on it and wrap it...

A Then that's all they do to it. Now the Japanese, them being they wanted the market, they don't do that. They make sure it fixed right so they want you to come back. And what kind of what happened, I heard about two guys like this, I talked to one of the guys personally. He used to work with us, he was good, then he went next door. And I saw that truck drive into the Mercury Dealer, I said I wonder what that truck there. So this guy was telling me you know like that one who work in paint?

Q Oh yea...

A The gray-haired guy. He was telling me about this guy who got, he had problems about it with a demonstrator? What is it now splito what? That Ford dealer (). And the truck, they would not adjust the carburetor. And he went there and tell them they could do it. This is your duty, pull the trucks in here and fix it and the guy'll come back and buy a Lincoln. And I was talking with another guy, and he said no not me. It was made in Kansas City it was a King Cab. It was made in Kansas City I guess. And he said that he was so happy that they fixing the truck for him, the carburetor problem, he went and

bought him a Lincoln. And he took it in there, he said he don't take it no where, but there to fix it. So that's what you see when you keep a warranty. This is what the Japanese is doing, it's not that they make better cars or stuff like that, they just keep up with their warranty. But the dealers here, they do not keep up with their warranty.

Q What do you think will change that? I mean you've talked about the warranty from the dealers, you've talked about the vendors as sort of the primary obstacles to real good quality in the 1980'.

A You know what could fix that? We started out at the truck plant with it and they decided to continue with it okay. We had problem where we was having another problem the tailgate clasp. A lot of report of you know warranty.

Q The tailgate clasp didn't come down?

A It didn't work and they tried it because their lines out. So we decided to have our campaign go into the dealer, see the information so we could stop that problem in the plant. And the first one, we went to the guys, said he couldn't release information because he didn't have anything to show because he needed some time. He said I know. You see he was hiding from us because he knows that the workers... So we went to the other one, he cooperated with us. He showed us the problem and he said that we don't have much problem, we don't sell that much truck with that much problem. We went to anther, the same man, John Ellis we went to one.

Q You mean you were driving around to the dealers?

A Yea.

Q Part of your job?

A Yea. To see what is the warranty that they have so they we can know to stop it in plant. They couldn't feed us no information on the warranty, they wouldn't have it so that made us, they charging the company for warranties that don't exist. Like you know. You have a bad paint job, alright a bad part. The company would send order for them to down to find out if it's company warranty, if it's warranty, they okay it and fix it. They should do that with those tailgate clasps. But hey, I'm not tired from doing this, but they should continue to do that. And when they know that they gonna have somebody come up to check and see what the problem, your warranty will disappear.

Q They get away with lying to the company to make their money and they're not repairing the problems either.

A Right. This is what I'm telling you now. Right now I bring my N-10 and went out driving.

Q It's a N-10.

A Yea, those Bronco trucks, and they don't give them the hourly employee, they give them to the supervisors. They give us Broncos to drive home and check it out to see what they think about it and say what about it. And when I brought it home, I could see we heard that it was pulling to the right, it was a problem they had in the front end system which I don't if they corrected it already, but it was a major problem because a lot complaints. So one day me and John Ellis, engineer, we went out there to Ypsi to a dealer to check on this same tailgate

clasp. And he said, why don't you drive this vehicle to see what you think of it? So I drive it, and I think about the second stop I made, I said, you see what it is? It started pulling to the right, he said right, so he write it on there. And these are things that a lot of hourly employees, by driving that, being in the supervision alone, the hourly employee driving N-10 they can discover a lot of problem that they can feed back to the plant, and they can try to correct them.

Q So the N-10 is sort of a privilege for the hourly employees to drive home a truck that he or she built, but it's more than that. It's a way to help...

A It's a way to help because um he can discover something that maybe ah ah ah, supervision don't describe. Because he have more knowledge at the problem than the supervisor. You have a lot of hourly employees that know more than the supervisors. Because they the one that fightin' with the problem every day. The supervisor come up to you and gotta do this, gotta do that, but he not seeing the problem that you have, and he won't listen to the problem most of the time that you having on the job. And this is a main problem in here. The guy have a problem, hey, let's solve it, because when that guy mad and you not solving his problem, he get where he don't care. The guy have a problem, you got to solve the problem. It causing him more time, more frustration on the job, you should try and help him. Especially if he's a good operator.

Q I think it's fantastic the way you're sharing some of the changes that have gone on. The E.I. program... This is all part of the Employee

Involvement program, how did you get involve with it?

A I'm gonna tell you exactly how I feel.

Q Okay.

A When I hear about he E.I. program, I wasn't thought I'd like it okay?

Q Why?

A Because of rumor, I don't listen to rumor. The way they conducted itself like that. No, reason why I get involved into it by working with this lock mechanism thing, I am having these problems. And this job had had problem from other department, I went to a few E.I. meetings. And I explained the problem I had with getting it. And it's not what I think from the beginning, you know what I'm saying now. Because I... When the E.I. program start, I was on medical. I come in there and hear about the rumor this and that you know. At that time they was laying off, laying off people when they hear something you don't know what's happening. Okay now, I think it's something good and one way, but not always that good because in this way when they went to the E.I. they went and picked certain people for E.I. They should go and have everybody that want to get involved. And then you pick the leader okay? Well they picked the leaders then, and this was... A lot of people think that E.I. when they go to meeting they talk about eliminating jobs, and it not true. Being I get involved and get up there it not true. No what I told them a hundred times, why don't they try to have a meeting, get all the... Talk to all the employee to get involved in the E.I. so that they can see what the E.I. is, that is not to eliminate jobs. If they do it the right way, it's to help the

people on the job. But this is the, the... They believe in all the people is to eliminate jobs, so most of them is against the E.I., but it's like what they think.

Q Has it eliminated job?

A Well I can't say...

Q From your experience?

A From my experience, I can't say you know, 'cause really I don't know much like I say I been just to a few meetings. And, but what I'll say, what they should do, they should have everybody... Invite everybody if they want to get involved in the E.I. so they can see what it is. No there a problem in the 'cause I told them, I told them, supervision, they gonna give the hourly operator a least four... They give him four classes of chemical. Four of them are classed about production about how the plant operates.

Q What do you mean?

A This is what I'm telling you now. When I first used to see the guys then, they lying down next to the guys and one of them try to keep the line going. These guys you know, they run some on 'em. Now I get them to understand why when they lost jobs, the company lost the money, we lost money too.

Q How did we lose it?

A Because they plant say if they run three hundred truck a day, this is what our wages is based on those three hundred trucks. Okay so much go for our wages, so much go for gas, so much go for lights, so much go for water, so much for ah ah hourly employee for supervision. So now

when the company lost maybe ten job in a day, the company lost that money. Because they still got to pay the same amount of money, but they didn't get amount of truck to cover the amount of money they paying out. This is how the plant run. Now I think they should do that to the operator, let them know, there's down time when they making on the line when somebody running to you know keep the line going, they don't know what's going on, they don't know why they do that. They think it's the company just wants to get production out. So I think they should have a meeting with them and let them know what it's like.

Q Explain the economics?

A Economics of how the plants operate.

Q The way they make their profits?

A The way they make their profits, where we get wages, where we get the benefits. I went to the class when I went to school for that job as operator. We all went to it, but they hourly employees never went into it.

Q You went to a class?

A Yea, yea, that's why I know about it. And now, I don't think like how I think before. I learned that much you know. I would of lost ten job today, ten tomorrow, ten the other. This is money the company not making. The company not making money. And the company have enough problem learning to make money. So we making money too. And now we can see it, when the company make money, we make money. Because look at the profit sharing check, which you didn't have before. A bonus check we didn't have before.

Q That's what we get now?

A Yea.

Q We get that instead of wage increases?

A Instead of wage increases. You know you get a lump sum money like that, you know, it's better than what you used to get. At Ford you never get nothing.

Q Well you used to get your wage increases.

A Your wage increases.

Q That was changed, rather than getting regular increase of wages, we get...

A You know, your profit sharing isn't sharing bad because you get it all in a lump sum, once a year, you can do better with than getting your wage increases, you know? I think it's...

Q You like the profit sharing and the bonus checks better than weekly raises?

A Yea because weekly raises, uh, you don't get it weekly, you get it hourly. And say like every three months, every month, all they do is they raise your taxes and you see you get a raise you don't see.

Q How has the union responded. Is the union involved with the E.I. program, or the concern for quality? Do you think the union is important, do you think it does a good job? What is it's purpose? A lot has changed, it's not the union out and around fighting the company.

A The union is important if the people is united. Because we are the union. The union without us is nobody. If we unite together and we

stick together and we help the union do something, the union will. But if not, it's nothing you know? And what I think, is a lot of things here with the union should involve and with the company and make certain agreement, certain things that used to happen in the past and I haven't seen lately, that used to happen past which was wrong, and create problem in the plant. Like say, you have a problem on the job, right? And you tell your supervisor, and you keep on telling him and he don't respond to your problem, but here is something get out in the line, and he gonna take it to the office and be processed. And everything the supervisor being saying up there is true, and he is lying! Which he lie. You know a lot of 'em lie. And they will say it's true and then they give us some time off, and you know the supervisor lying you know labor relations take up on his side. You know what, you're mad, when you get back in there you're frustrated. You don't give a damn about what happen. And this is why what they trying to do, not to do that now. And this is why we see better things happening in the plant with operations today. It's a lot powerful in the same way. They do something dirty they don't suppose one day, and you're gonna just change completely, which a lot of them had done. Some of them don't, but some of them will.

Q Can you give me an example?

A An example? I'm gonna tell you what happened to me one time as an example why and I never did change. But when I was inspector, I have, I was in a job that they put in the job that day. The relief man work with me like about fifteen minutes and he's gone. You can't learn a

job in fifteen minutes. Okay the next day... I work on the job then. The next day, the foreman come and told me that if I... I said no, I don't know that job. I said that guy that put on it, I said I was I'm not qualified to do the job. I said if you want me, I never say no, I say if you want me go there, I'll do what I can, but I don't know the job. So what happened, a steering wheel was loose, the guy put the nut in the ground and didn't tighten it, he didn't say nothing to me, nobody say nothing to me. And they say when Calloway (?) was there to get into the garage, Calloway wait, the steering wheel come loose, Calloway waste time.

Q Calloway was the production manager, plant manager?

A Something like that. Now when the car lift foreman he should have admist it and tell him I have a problem, I didn't have anybody, I put this man on the job, the man don't know the job you know. No... He wanted to cover hisself. These things have happened, you know it's no good. Foreman covered himself like that. So, they come in and told me to go to labor relations. Now ah Buddy, I was working for him that day. Buddy's the one when I worked, he said I tell you you gonna be out. I said for what! He said oh something, they did something bad to you I don't like it. He said don't change Lorenzo, don't change Lorenzo, I said okay. Then I went there, they was waiting and when I went in there it's Sonny Diablo (?), he went to Kansas City now. I was mad. And he said well, I understand Lorenzo did the job for us a time. And I get mad, I say what you mean by wasting time. I said hey, I was told to work on the job just today and nobody trained me on the

job, and I tried it. He said did anybody tell you? I said wait a minute, are you gonna put word in my mouth, and I got mad. And I started cursing at 'em. And he said they was gonna give me some time off. I said, I don't care, do what you want. They want to give me some time off, go back to work because it needs me, and give me some time off at the end of the day. And I said no, I'm going home right now. So I went home, and um, me and Brian we get together and I'm...

Q Brian, the Union Rep.?

A Yea. And I made agreement, and they are to take it off my record and they have to pay me. So I was going to... Charlie was there, I said well you what? I'm getting mad now. If this don't straighten up, I'm going to see Calloway myself and I'm gonna telling him everything what happened. Which is what I should have did, but I was so mad. I should of go straight to Calloway and you know, he was the one who was gonna look bad, because he should have somebody trained and qualified to do that job whenever he needs it, you know. So anyway, they took it off my record and they pay me the back pay and... Now if it was some operator, you know what, they'll work it, the way they work today. For some people, that's enough for them to change.

Q To just have a rotten attitude?

A That's right, that's what's happening in that plant there. There's a lot of wrong doing that's going on in that plant there with good working people.

Q Do you think that's gotten more or less, the wrong doing?

A Right.

Q Do you think it's happening more of the wrong doing? Or less?

A Well, until you kind of check up the line you know, but some of them are already out of control. The people, the operators just don't care you know.

Q So the union is important to provide that protection when the company gets a little out of...

A Yea, yea, gets out of hand. Not the company, the supervision. The supervisors.

Q What is the difference between the supervisors and the company?

A Well, the difference is not the company did that, the supervisors did it.

Q The particular person?

A You can't say the company person, because Ford Motor Company don't know what happened between me and the job. It's the supervisor. If he don't want to go to get down, last time we went to labor relations right? So when this is something for the union to stop. The hour labor relations provides a go behind and a separate room on top, why? That don't suppose to be. You suppose to hear what everybody saying. They hear what you say, why you don't hear what they say. And what I think, it the supervisor don't have groans, putting the lie to the guy, the union should make a deal with the company that don't penalize him. What happens some time, some supervisor that might don't like you for some reason, they put you over here in the street for... I'm seeing it a long time now, for two or three weeks you have a problem and your wife don't work, you gonna have a hard time. You want the company

paying you, you the one having a hard time, when you don't get the money two or three weeks short, you know. So what they do, they're hurting you in one way see, trying to get even with you.

Q Do you think the supervisors have changed much over the last five years since the E.I. program and the concern for quality and new relationships?

A I really don't know because I tell you something, I just don't get involved in that part.

Q In your own area?

A I just get involved in my job because I do my job because the company pay me to work and I'm gonna do the job the best I can. You see what I mean? But this is what I do you know. I really think you make good money there, we have a good job regardless to our problems, and I think we should you know make the money at the plant today.

Q How much did you make this last year?

A I make about close to forty five this year. Where can you make that money. I work hard.

Q I know, there's no doubt about that.

A But where can you make that kind of money?

Q You're running for ten hours.

A Yea.

Q I know you miss lunch sometimes too if a problem comes up.

A I work through lunch if a little problem for them you know.

Q Do you work Saturdays and Sundays too?

A No, sometime. I work sometimes. I work a few Saturdays.

Q I see they're...

A But why I do it because I know um quality control manager, Cabra (?), I know Mr. Dissalah (?), the assistant manager, I know they have good consideration to me, the way I'm working.

Q They give you some real respect?

A They prove it to me, they give me respect. I respect them too. They give me respect, they give me recognition on my job what I'm doing and that's why I do it. You see what I mean? It's not like some of the guys that say well, they don't care. They care alot about me, because they know what I'm doing.

Q How do you know, they know?

A They know, because they see what I'm doing. They know what I'm doing. I talk to them all the time. When I have a problem, I talk to them, and they solve it for me. They come personally talk to me one time. They come personally see me to see what the problem.

Q I see them talking with you.

A This is something I like about them, and I appreciate it about them. I never talk with Callaway, I will say Hi, but I can't, uh, you have more complication and more open door with the plant manager and assistant manager we have there.

Q So it's gotten better?

A Yea. And they all around, and when you have... Any operator can go and talk to them if you have a problem, and he gonna go right there and look and see exactly what the problem is.

Q It's not like it was ten years ago, fifteen years ago where...

A Yea, you talking a problem, you had to go talk to somebody. You can walk into any one of the office right now and they'll tend to you, and nobody can say anything about it. You go to plant manager office for problem before they would try to something against you, get rid of you or something like that you know.

Q It's a whole different atmosphere?

A Yea, the problem is to get that quality you know.

Q What kind of effect do you think the new technology... I see they have robots now for sealer on the side panels, there's a glass fitting in machine, which is a robot now; the sealer line I know is getting robots in March or April; the body shop has about twenty robots; what effect, and what do you think about that?

A Well, I don't know. I tell you what, that sealer, a robot putting that sealer to me is ah, I like it because it's helped me. When it wasn't a robot, that lady used that black sealer, and it was a mess when I have to work on it. Which now is much easier for me and for her too. Because she hasn't lost her job. She's still doing her job. That robot is doing part of the job that she had to do by hand, which is something better for her to use than that black stuff she was using.

Q I bet you used to have to wash it off, I used to use a special gas to wash it.

A Yea, you have to use all that detergent, that's not good for you. Even the tailgate, they use that same sealer. When I have to work on the tailgate man, it's like day from night. The other time with that black sealer, it was really a mess to work under those tailgates. So I think

that's improvement. Because I seen it eliminated the job, so I think it's a good improvement.

Q It hasn't eliminated any in trim yet?

A No.

Q What about in the glass installation?

A In the glass installation?

Q I don't know much.

A I don't know that much about that operation.

Q Let me shift a little from the operation of the work, which I think you painted a really, really good picture for folks to get a sense of, to how do you think folks get along in the plant? Men and women, being a Cuban yourself, you were born and raised there, how have you been received in the plant? Did you get much harrassment?

A No. I don't, I don't get any, and I won't get any. Because I won't let them give it to me. That's what I tell you, because I look for respect and I respect. So if they have it, they can keep it in their heart, but not come out to bother me. 'Cause you know I'm outspoken with folks.

Q There is no doubt about that. Do you think most folks keep their junk inside and they don't...

A With me...

Q With you.

A I think they keep it.

Q Yea, what about with others?

A I don't know with others. But with me they keep it. Because they know

I won't take it from them. And I tell them like it is. I don't care about nationality, color, or nothing. I care about the man, I said you respect me, I respect you. And I don't care if you don't like me, 'cause I got my color, keep it in his heart it' okay, but don't bring it out me, or bring it to me in my face. So as long as they don't bring it in my face, it's alright with me. 'Cause I go in there to work. The company pay me to work, I'm gonna do my job, and that's it.

Q How do you think the women get treated in the plant?

A That I really can't tell you much about that you know.

Q What do you think about women working in the plant?

A To me, it don't make me no difference. I think most of the women work in the plant is because the money, the benefits they have. Because nobody want to live bad, and the only way you can live good, today, to make a decent living, is to work in the plant where you make thirty, forty thousand dollars. Have all those fringe benefits we have you know insurance and stuff like that. And I think that's what most of the women in this plant because, and I consider, ah, I have alot of consideration for the women who work in the plant, because, ah, they work there because they want a make a decent living like we. So it don't bother me in seeing women work in a plant. I respect them, just like I respect a man. And to me it's no objection of a women working in a plant you know. I know a lot of them think about like that, but...

Q A lot what?

A A lot of people think about that, uh, don't like to see women work in a

plant you know and maybe their wife don't work, or they work somewhere else like that. But, most of the women today that is working is because they want to make a better living you know. So I respect them for it.

Q Wasn't it your nephew who is a ball player who came in? I think that was fantastic, he got a lot of publicity, the media was out there... What happened that day? Who was...

A I don't know, I wasn't out there that day.

Q You weren't there?

A I was there, but I wasn't out there.

Q I'm gonna ask you a little about the other part of your life, and you can share what you would like to share, okay? When you were growing up... First how old are you?

A Me? I'm fifty-two.

Q So you were born in 1934, and you came to the states in 65? When you were coming up in Cuba, what did you dream about, what did you think you would do when you were fifty-two years old?

A Well, I really never thinking about that, but the only thing what I think in my life, I think the good lord gave me that. That I will always love Ford vehicles. And I end up working for Ford, and that's what I drive today. That was the whole dream of my life. I was crazy about Ford cars.

Q When you were a kid?

A When we was kids growing up, and I don't necessarily remember, when Ford making those cars like in the 40, and then he stuck that engine, I

worked on them, because I went to trade school mechanics. And they used to have the, the engines up to holes and they used to come from these, the valve cover then was on the side, and it used to come from the center all the way over to the radiator and to come underneath. And it was the out of kerosene and they used to... The cooling system was real bad. And they used to run hot and they would just stall you know. They had better pick up than any other car, like better than Chevrolet, but after certain miles, driving a hundred miles, it will get hot. The cooling system wasn't working right and then the Chevrolet passed them. Oh I used to mad when I heard that, you know, when I was kid I heard that and made me mad. We used to argue alot about it you know.

Q About cars?

A Yea, cars. And I said I know one day I'm gonna be able to see Ford get ahead of General Motors and it finally happened. That was my dream.

Q Really! So did your parents or you have a car?

A No, my parent had a car.

Q When you worked in the trade school, were you raised in the city or the country?

A Well, it was like say, it wasn't country, because it was walking distance to the city, and I was in the city all the time, you know? I used to go to school in the city.

Q You hung around cars?

A Yea, I used to hop cars when somebody was walking barefooted, these trucks. I used to hop the pickup trucks, they used to come on the farm

there, when would chase them down and hop in. And then when I went to trade school, we work on a small cylinder Ford and we work on... Newest one we work on was a 1948 and 49 Ford. Yea I liked to work mostly on the Ford.

Q Why did you like the Ford?

A I don't know. It was just something that was in my heart that I like Ford vehicles. And just met a girl got a girlfriend. But I come here I tell you what too. I told a guy I said look, look, if I have to buy a General Motors car I would rather buy a Toyota than your model of car. When I come here to live for my life I went to Jose (?) told me about it, I could get in.

Q Is that the same Jose in the paint department?

A No. He was back in the body shop. He died about two years ago now. He used to come over and relieve for workers. So when, ah, I went to ah my buddy let's go to um Fleetwood, you know, Fisher Body. We went there, the guy knew my brother and he said that you know something? You come eight days ago we get you a job, we just hired eight welders last week, if something change, I will call you. So I keep on waiting and waiting and went to a few different places looking for job you know and stuff like that. So I said well, I told my brother, I said Jose told me he would get me a job, why don't we go there? So we finally went there and got jobs. After waiting, August it will twenty two years I been at Fords. I'm still waiting for them to pick me at General Motors, and they never called me. They threwed the application away. I said I would never buy a car from them. I heard one time, I

w ent over to base, this guy, a friend of mine was leaving, I bought a 1955 Chevrolet, but I didn't like it. I never liked General Motors cars.

Q You've had Fords ever since you have been in the states?

A I never buy a G.M. car.

Q And what to you drive now?

A Um, Mercury Grand Marquis.

Q Your wife has a Taurus?

A No that's my daughter. My wife drive a Lincoln.

Q You have one daughter who lives at home?

A She'll be twenty three.

Q Is she going back to...

A She's in college.

Q Where is she?

A She went to Lansing in college.

Q What is she studying?

A She studying business.

Q What kind of work did your folks do? Your mom and dad when you were coming up?

A My mom didn't work. My dad used to work. He used to be in charge of a farm. But my mom never did work.

Q Are they still alive?

A No. My mom died, um, four to six years, and my dad gone three years.

Q And your wife is also from Cuba?

A Yea.

Q How long have you been married?

A We been married a little more than twenty three years.

Q Was it a big adjustment coming to the states?

A For me? For her, yea. But for me, it wasn't that much because by me working the base, I was adjusted American style. Like what's going on in the plant, I went through it on the base. So when I come ther, it wasn't a difference for me.

Q What was similar?

A You know something comes to my mind, I wish me and my brother, I say I wish I didn't know that word when I was in Cuba. I say I didn't know that word that we calling this guy from the country a hillbilly. I said when these come running their mouth, I tell them you nothing but nothing but a hillbilly from the Riverside you know. Because they used to come on the base you know they would pretend they was no difference from out in the world out there you know.

Q These are the same people who work in the plant, work in plantombo (?)

A Yea.

Q No it was harder on your wife not having that experience?

A Yea, that experience yea. You know the way they live here, like uh, back home was family like... A neighbor here or here would visit each other, we'd talk, we'd say... Okay I don't talk with both of my neighborhood. They don't visit me, I don't visit them, you know. But back home it completely different you know. And back home we had windows not glass like this and have them open just like in the summer time. I adjusted to it really, because I know how it was in the area

you know. But she took a long time. And still a lot of things I'm not adjusted.

Q Which ones?

A Just the ways of some of the people and how they... live with each other here you know.

Q I don't know what you mean.

A Well some people you know, they... Like how you say, they don't feel good if somebody comes from other country and see you have something like them or better than them. A lot of them don't feel good that way, I know that. But you have here is you work for it...

Q Nobody gave it to you?

A Nobody give it to you. And I think everybody could do the same if you want to to.

Q You have one daughter. Do you have other children?

A Yea. I have five children altogether.

Q Five children?

A Yea.

Q So the other four all grown and...

A They all grown yea.

Q Got out of the house?

A Yea. I had one in California and two here, and I had two back home. They are grown though.

Q And they still live in Cuba?

A Yea they live in Cuba.

Q What kind of work do they do?

A Well, one of them is a soccer and football instructor. You know what is soccer? The one with the foot. And the other one, he studies something, of um, I don't know, work in an engine room you know in ships. He was working in that ship you know. He is a Merchant Marine, I don't know really what he doing know, because I don't have any communication with him lately. So the both of them they went to school.

Q So you'll go and you'll them when you...

A No. Where I'm going, where I'm going I won't ever see 'em. I'm going to the American side see. The naval base.

Q Oh that's where you're going?

A Yea.

Q You're not going back on...

A No. No. See, um, the naval base is like say okay. Like city of the United States, okay. Say you can go back and forth to Canada, but over there you can't because of being Castro is a Communist Government, it's just like in, ah, West Berlin and in Russia. Okay the American people then would like to go over and visit their people to get a Visa, but they won't let the Russian then come over because I go if I may you know in Germany in the Russian side and a lot them might stay and they don't want them to stay. This is the same situation they have down there.

Q You could go and visit right?

A Well...

Q If you had a Visa.

A If I can get a Visa I could go, but they... I went for one before, but see, they closed down most flight now so you got to go through a red tape. To go to Cuba now over on Castro side.

Q Through Mexico?

A Yea. It's a lot of problems. It's not that easy. When I go, all I have to do is take your papers and stuff like that and sign the application and they would let you go.

Q I don't understand, you go to the Panama (?) side I thought you said the base was mostly Americans.

A The base is American yes. It's American.

Q So you're visiting some American friends.

A No, I'm visiting family, a brother of mine.

Q Who worked there?

A Who worked there.

Q I see, now I understand. So he also doesn't get to the other side either?

A No. He cannot.

Q Was it difficult when you were working all the overtime hours. You know, like when we were working ten hours a day, eleven hours, twelve hours at Ford. Was that difficult on your family? Raising your children?

A No, not really. I never had a problem with my daughter, school, by me working out away from the home. You know a lot of hours, people claims kids are like this because... I tried to keep the lord all in my house.

Q You try to keep?

A Law and order in my house when I'm out of it you know. My kids know what I like and what I don't like and that's it.

Q The children here; one is in school in business, in Lansing, and what is your other children do as far as work?

A Well, my other one she working now. She working now, she work at Kresge and the other one in California, she was working at a place, I forgot now, but she, I haven't talk to her, I don't know exactly what she is doing, if she working now or not. She was supposed to go back to college, I don't know if she go or not. I haven't talked to her lately.

Q How do you spend your time outside of work? Do you go to... What do you do within your church?

A In my church? Well I'm a usher at the church. You know, pickup collection. And I'm involved in all the programs they have at the church. When they have fund raising. They have something lik a carnival every year to raise money to you know, fix up the church. I usually go and work.

Q Is the church in the neighborhood or do you have to drive?

A No. It's down by Canada bridge, it's a long way. I don't mind. I used to go there.

Q It's Southwest Detroit.

A No, it's St. Anne's.

Q Oh, St. Anne's, sure. Sure, I've been to St. Anne's. I was there for a New Year's Eve party about three years ago. It was more than three

years ago. It must have been four or five years ago.

A I think I missed that year. I missed a few years. I usually go every year, but a few years I missed, 'cause a friend of mine up here she's giving a party, and I usually go. But we used to go to most of all of the New Year's Eve parties.

Q I have a good number of friends who... I lived there, I lived on Vinewood in...

A Big John, Big John you know Big John the short guy.

Q Uh huh.

A Big John told me he used to go there when he used to live in that area.

Q When you think about... You got twenty one years...

A Almost twenty two.

Q Eight more years left, what are you going to do when you retire?

A When I retire? Well, I think well, what I'll do when I retire, I think I'll get more involved in the church. More activities in the church. There is a lot of things to do, you can do in the church to keep you active just like if you was working, but one reason I don't do it now, being I have a responsibility of going to work and I can't do most of that. The way we working, you know I think when I get off work I'll be you know become more active in... There's a lot of activities in the church.

Q Are you saving for your retirement now?

A Yea, well I'm working on that now. I'm preparing for my retirement.

Q How do you prepare?

A Well, what I did, I'm trying to um, I'm going to invest my profit

sharing, I'm gonna invest most of it in my stock. And this money, my money market so we'll have something extra.

Q So you're not going to take the case and buy a V.C.R.?

A No way, uh uh.

Q That's not where you're at in life.

A I got to find out with Art or somebody. Last year I signed up for them you know that card, and I... You know I was thinking you know about something like that.

Q They take up to two percent out a week and it's tax-free, it's off the top, and it goes straight into your retirement. Tax exemption, shares...

A Yea, I know it was in the car there one time. I read it, but I didn't understand it.

Q I didn't either until...

A Because I see these other people getting you know so much you know, interest they're getting us you know. They get you know, I had eight-two dollars and what did you get?

Q I only got twenty-five dollars.

A You know she started after me, and one year she get more...

Q Does she work for Ford?

A No, she work for General Motors.

Q Oh, she works for General Motors. After what you just told me.

A No, but she not, we never discuss jobs. She realize the problem they have they at G.M. She told me, and I told her problem we had at Fords. But they had more problem than we with quality. See what

happened, I tell you what. Like Kile (?) when I was a kid, I recognized the problem of Ford, and what they had with the engine before, okay. Well them at General Motors they don't want to recognize that General Motor is building a bad vehicle, and all the vehicle look the same. The Cadillac, the Oldsmobile, Chevrolet, then they cheating the people and giving them Chevrolet engines to Oldsmobile and charging them for it you know. You don't cheat people like that anymore. That's why you say, we got to get up and fight the fact. I know someone who'll do his job rotten. But I think, if I'm fifty-two, and I can move around the way I move, I know a lot of these younger guys can do it if they want to.

Q They say yea, we're gonna get about two-thousand dollars, they'r getting twenty-five hundred for profit sharing and you can put some into your Ford...

A I think I should... That time they say about two-thousand, I had I think it was twenty-fiv.

Q Oh, so you might get three-thousand this year?

A Yea, because I work a lot of hours.

Q You sure do.

A So I'm gonna try it. What I'm telling you about, what I'm saying, today like even, I told my wife one time if she wanted some money, better put it in the money market. I got a letter from the bank where they're gonna drop the interest five percent. You still getting six percent; five something and six over five-thousand, twenty-thousand you got six percent. You still getting more putting your money in um, Ford

Money Market than have it in the bank and an I.R.A. Your I.R.A. don't worth anything anymore. You know. I put in the Ford Money Market this is why I like Ford Money Market. If you need some money, hey, you gotta check book. If you want to you write the check and you got it, no penalty. You have it in the bank there, you have a big penalty come out. Because you don't know what might happen, you hope you don't have to need it, but when you save money it's because you save it for when you needed it. You don't use it just for you know, but if you need it you can use it. That's what you're saving for.

Q So you been saving all along? Particularly now with the kids being grown you probably...

A Yea, it's much easier for me to save, you know. And of course I have my house paid off, which I don't have to worry about...

Q Your house paid off?

A Yea. It's paid off, yea.

Q That's a nice feeling I bet?

A Yea, I sure do. That monthly payment you don't have, you pay your taxes every year you know. If you pay your tax then you don't have to worry about anything.

Q Where does your wife work at G.M.?

A It's a G.M. It's Westland Plant you know in Livonia. And um, Plymouth Road and um between Middlebelt and Inkster.

Q What do they make?

A It was Fisher Body in Livonia, but they call it Westland, Trim Plant.

Q Trim Plant?

A You know, cushion.

Q We were talking about retirement, that's how we got to money. You'll spend more time at the church, you're taking care of your financial... Do you want to travel much, do you...

A After I retire, I'm planning to that, if the good lord let me. I'm planning on doing a little bit of traveling you know.

Q Where would you like to go?

A Well, I would like to go to San Amingo (?), I would like to go to Hawaii, I would like to go to... I would like to go to the Holy Land, Jesus died on the cross over there. I would like to go there you know.

Q What do you think the truck plant or an auto plant is going to look like in twenty years or fourteen years, the year 2000? What do you think an auto plant is going to look like? How different will it be?

A Well, the auto plant, the whole difference is going to be, it's gonna be to me, it's gonna be a lot of automation in there. You know, there's not going to be that much people working...

Q When you say alot, what do you mean? Right now we have about eleven hundred, twelve hundred people working.

A I think in that time, we might have about seven hundred.

Q Almost half. What do you think is gonna happen to the people, to the young kids coming up now? You and I make a good living there, there's no doubt about it. What's gonna happen with the fact that young people coming up can't get those good jobs. What do you think?

A Well, if they have education they gonna have job. The production job will be eliminated, but the engineering jobs and stuff like that is

gonna be there. Because they gonna have to have a lot more engineer to operate those robot and all those machine they're gonna have because all this computer, they gonna have to have more computer technicians to repair those computer when they down. So if the younger kids go and get an education and get skilled job, they will still have a job. But if they don't have an education or no kind of skill, they just won't have a job.

Q Do you think there's enough jobs for everybody who gets skilled to get a job?

A Well, I don't think if it keep up like this it'll be for everybody, but what I think, they should do, the union accomplish and get together with the government to do them. I think the auto employer, the most he should work, is twenty-five years. Like on the foundary plant. And like we twenty-five years and that way we are able to retire earlier, and the younger generation will be able to have a job quicker. Because I think the amount of money we paying in social security now, I think we should be able to retire twenty-five years with no doubt.

Q How much do you pay a year?

A I pay over three thousand this year.

Q So you think that if they had retirement at a younger age and the well-paying jobs...

A Some won't, but the way they condition the auto industry now, I think a lot of people gonna think twice and they gonna retire.

Q What do you mean?

A A lot of people don't want to retire you know, they have time...

Q Yea, a lot of guys have thirty-five years in...

A But they don't want to retire, but the condition of the Wayne Plant, things is now, I think a lot of them will retire now. A lot of them will retire now because they are a scared of what... They don't know what might happen you know.

Q I don't follow that yet. Now they might retire because they are afraid of what?

A Of the plant, laying off, or closing down, or stuff like that you know. And then they would end up with nothing. They would rather retire now and make sure they get a retirement.

Q But they just had this steel company who people have retirement and then they went bankrupt and said we're not giving you your retirement. Which was a pretty big shock. Could you imagine Ford Motor Company saying...

A Now like say, those guys that have more than the time and they retire, they won't fall in that set. This is why I say a lot of people will get scared now and retire while they have a chance at retire. I had a friend and he had age to retire, you know he went by age and not by time, and the plant was gonna close on 'em and he said.... I said the best thing you retire. They closed down and went to somewhere down south. If he didn't retire, he'd end up without nothing.

Q Do you fear for your job?

A Well, I don't know yet, you know, because nobody knows what's gonna happen. But I think with twenty-two years and maybe this plant closed down that I would probably have a chance to go to another plant or not.

But maybe, but nobody knows what's gonna happen yet. I consider about it, that's why I think consider about, uh, trying my best and work with the people and see what... If we get quality out, we don't be scared of a job. Hey, if we build good vehicles, they're gonna sell, we're gonna have a job. If they're not selling, hey, the company don't want to have a plant open making trucks and not selling. The company has to make money to profit... What do you call it, um, the stock holders got to make money, they have their money invested. That's why they invest their money in stock.

Q So quality is the bottom line?

A Quality is the bottom line.

Q So what to you think about these Korean cars coming in now, and Yugoslavian cars making quality? G.M. is buying them and bringing them in. Ford is building a Mazda Plant down in Flat Rock.

A I don't think that Yugo's that quality. It's a car for a poor person, okay. Somebody that make minimum wages that they can afford to buy a new car. So I pretty sure if I get the Yugo and drive it to work like where I go to work everyday, it will not keep up. I'm pretty sure it will not. I know it, definitely. Because I drive forty-two miles round trip every day.

Q Me too.

A And, I tell you what, I had a Marquis at trade and I had it for three years and I never did tune it up. And you couldn't tell I didn't tune that car up. I like to bring any Japanese car and let me put it together and see if it will keep up like my car. I never take in the

dealer for no major problem, nothing.

Q Three years?

A Three years. I have some plugs right now in the basement and they never needed changing. And this is not one, this is the third one I had like that, that never had no problem. I had one for three years, I didn't have major problem with it, I had another one for two years, ah twenty-six months and you know those two that I had before you know the problem I had? When I have like six-thousand miles, terrible start. They say another problem you come back too.

Q The starter?

A No, the thermostat.

Q The thermostat.

A That's been the problem. You know? Just like I told that's been the problem. Not making the quality up to date with the parts.

Q What do you think about Ford and the Mazda Plant coming to Flat Rock?

A I think it's a good idea, at least most of those people at factory got laid off... They will get their job back... Get a job back. That Flat Rock will get the tax revenue. They'll be helping the state. I think it's a good idea.

Q It's good that they're coming here then?

A Uhm, um. Well it's gonna come where they're gonna have to come here and produce because the cars... The majority of the car they produce is sold in United State. And if the auto worker in the United State got laid off and don't have a job, who gonna buy the cars then? So they definitely... They want to bring the plant in here to United

States.

Q You said you drive a Marquis?

A Yea.

Q And you've been driving them for a long time?

A I been driving Marquis, since 1979. I used to drive Mercury. I had Mercury Monterray, I had a two Mercury Monterray, and the other one, two, three, four, Grand Marquis.

Q What do you like best about the one you have now?

A Well, the electronic fuel injection.

Q Why is that so good?

A It's really, um, it's more silent, it have more power, it's um, it's um, have better gas mileage, and in the morning when you wake up and you start it up, it don't take too long to idle down. The other one would idle and it idle real low, and sometime if I'm in a hurry to leave, I have to kick down with the accelerator to leave. This one, by the time I open it and, um, start it up, I get the scraper if we have frost, because we have no snow yet, by the time I scrape the frost off, the idle go down right away.

Q How much did you pay for it?

A I pay of fourteen four.

Q Did you pay cash, or how do you pay?

A No.

Q Is that a dream to pay cash for a car?

A Not really, I don't think I'll pay cash for a car. I don't think so. I usually trade them every three years, you know, what's the balance

left and what I get, I go out and keep them about three years.

Q Do you have any regrets that you've been an auto worker for twenty two years?

A No.

Q What's your biggest satisfaction?

A Well, my biggest satisfaction I had is for what I achieved by working in the factory you know. They raise my family, took care of my family, I have my home, my cars, what I have in life, I'm enjoying life, you know. I went to California quite a few times; went to Florida; Toronto, Canada; Cuba, this is the third time I'm going back to Cuba. So what do I have to regret? You know. New York, I been to New York three times.

Q How is your health?

A Well, my health right now is pretty good.

Q Were you concerned while we were laid off for a little while, but the truck plant has always been an overtime plant. Were you concerned when we got laid off in 79 or 80 or that you might lose your job there? What would you have done?

A No. I wasn't concerned about that, because I know, I know the gas prices was something that the company, they was producing they was producing that. We didn't have no gas shortage. It's no such thing as gas shortage. They just want to make a lot more money than they should.

Q What do you think the government should do to make the auto industry better, or to provide more security? Do you think the government

should be doing anything?

A I think what they should do is, in this company, tell 'em, well, if you want to put a plant in Mexico, well, put more pressure on them and the stuff they make in Mexico. Put a higher tax on them so they don't take so much jobs out of the country.

Q So then there should be some more protection.

A More protection probably.

Q Stopping the corporations from leaving?

A Yea.

Q But, if they are going to leave, make them pay?

A Make 'em pay, right. Like the Japanese do you know. They make a lot of stuff over in Japan, but to sell over here... You know what I heard on the news yesterday? That a lot of people gonna be more... It's cheaper just like here to sell in Europe all over country by mail just like one the stores are buying. They gonna make it so cheap, that people shop overseas.

Q If you could say, not to Henry Ford, whoever the chairman of the Ford now... Peterson, these are the three things that you need to do to get better production and make Ford Motor more profitable, what would you tell him?

A What would I tell him? Well, I think the main thing I would tell him is I would like to see what they'll do and I think, uh, we'll get more competitive, more profitable, is raise our warranty to about, uh, two years or twenty four miles. That way the vendor then would be more commit to make a better quality part. Instead of one year, two years

that would put some more quality in the parts. And that way we won't have that hustler hitting him in the head to get quality.

Q If you could say that to Owen Beaver of the U.A.W., what would you say?

A Of the U.A.W.?

Q Yes. What do you want in the next contract coming up in September?

A I would like in the next contract, is come to agreement instead of getting a high wages, get us more benefit you know.

Q What kind of benefits?

A Well, like say uh, I tell you what now, like uh, they tried to get this benefit where the whole family or yourself, we when we go into a hospital, they don't want to kick us out dying, like they do on the Blue Cross/Blue Shield to save money. Because I don't think that's fair of, you know, the way you heal, and you go in there because everybody is not the same. You can't have the same operation and nothing happen, and I can have the same operation and have a complication. And here you gonna give me operation and send me off you know all bloody and bleeding. I don't think that's fair.

Q That has happening now?

A It's happening right now, it happened to a friend of mine.

Q What happened?

A She have operation they send her home. They take the stitches out before they sent her home. And soon as she came home, the stitches then came loose and she had to back into the hospital again.

Q Because the insurance company is putting the pressure...

A Putting the pressure them. And this is something I think they should

do something about that. Because I have some concern on the job, you say hey, you work and you got sick, and they don't want you to stay in the hospital because they want to save money, I don't think that's fair.

Q Any other benefits, anything else you'd have to say?

A Well, let me see what else. I think it's, um, raise the retirement to more to at least about, anybody would go, fifteen hundred and I think a lot of people would go and retire early.

Q What do they get now, twelve fifty or something?

A Twelve fifty. I think anybody with fifteen hundred now, with twenty years, twenty five years, I think so. I think somebody have twenty five years, give them the benefit and they'll go. When I get twenty five, if they give twelve fifty and my benefits, you know, my hospitalization, I'll go right away, I won't work a day more, for what? The earlier I leave, the more I can enjoy life, you know. Because I would like to retire and die with two or three days off like a lot of people do.

Q You'll be young when you retire too.

A I'll be sixty. I lot of people retire with thirty or forty years. And another thing to I think the union, the company, they should get a fair government because we paying so much social security, I think that money... They should go right in and they should do it. Well, go right in and tell the government, I think this is time, you all been playing game with us, take our money and put it in a trust fund where we earn interest. That way when we retire, we can get more money and

we can live a decent life. Because that's what the federal government doing with our social security money is not fair. You have guys dying out there today and they don't want to give them the social security. That's not fair. Because I know a guy, that guy was in bed with his eyes, his back, sometime the guy was crippled in the bed and couldn't even walk, and the social security still didn't want to give him the social security.

Q They just cut him off.

A No. They didn't want to give it to him. And some of them, they'll cut it off. Like you know a guy that have maybe one or two or three bypass they want him to go back in that plant and work. You know, it don't make sense.

Q Yea, you see that a lot. What is the biggest complaint you have about the plant?

A The biggest complaint? I tell you, uh, I really don't have any big complaints about the plant. Especially the way they run it today and the things that go on today. They try to keep it clean, they trying to put like now I heard they gonna put that new paint booth in. You won't have all the fumes and stuff like that in there you know. I really don't have that much complaint right now.

Q How have you changed in the last twenty two years you have been there? When you look at yourself when you were twenty two years ago hiring in, how have you changed the most?

A Well, I'll tell you, I don't think I changes that much. The only thing that changes is I get older, but I don't think they changed me 'cause I

still work the same way that I go to work, I probably even faster than when I was working. So I don't think I have changed. I have learned a lot more by working in different job and different area, I learned a lot more in the plant. I go to a few meetings that I went and hear more about the problem in the plant with the company, what the company do and stuff like that you know. There are a lot of things that I've learned which I didn't know before you know.

Q I can't ask you the question what do you do when you are just bored on the line, because you're never bored you're always working.

A That's my problem why I work like that because when it's nothing to do, I get bored. I rather be working. And if I keep working like that and I know when I retire, I'm gonna feel the same way. But if you keep bored and keep a slow pace that's the same way you're gonna be when you retire. That's why people who retire and they just die or get sick you know, because they just give up. You know, you buy a new car right, don't care what it is. Drive it for maybe five or six years at maybe thirty miles a hour, forty miles a hour, and then get out there one day and want to drive it at eighty, ninety, see what gonna happen. Something gonna happen right. That's the same way your body is. That's why I keep working like that all the time.

Q Thank you very much and have a great vacation.