

GARY SHELLNBARGER

G: Changed all the moldings, pulled off and stripped, the interior decorating, the carpeting

R: How'd it look?

G: Oh, it's unreal, but uh... the big thing is that we would like a change. The house...it's not a small house really, even though it's four bedrooms. It's really not quite large enough, you kind of feel cluttered. All the rooms are small, it's really a small tri-level. I mean, the kitchen I mean, you can see, five people try to sit around the kitchen table here, I mean you have trouble getting in and getting out. This is an owner home that we're going to, the rooms are bigger. It's a three bedroom ranch, the bedrooms are 14-12, 14-11, and the smallest is the 10-11.

R: When was the house you're buying built?

G: Oh, about 30 years ago, right around 30 years ago.

R: Right after the war.

G: And uh, hey, it's got plastered walls, living room is a nice sized living room. Our living room, it's scaled down, once you get the furniture in it you're not going to get too many people in it. And the other one has a nice big full basement and it's all finished off so there is room, plus there is a nice little dining room you can get six or seven people in and around the table and have some room. So, if you want to have family over for Thanksgiving or something or get together, you don't have to feel cramped and that's the biggest thing, you know, to have a little living space, the kids want to come in, bring some friends in, there is room. They have a place to entertain and not bother the rest of the family, or feel like everybody is in their way.

R: Where were you raised?

G: I was raised in Taylor, I was born in Detroit. Harper Hospital. and raised in Taylor. My mother and father were divorced right before I was born. My mother raised me until I was seven by herself. I spent alot of time, well, she worked, she worked in a supermarket. She saved her money and she invested in... with my grandmother's husband. My grand mother and grandfather were divorced in their later years and she married again. He was a truckdriver. And so, my mother and Steve invested in steel truck

R: Steel Hauler

G: Steel Hauler, right. And they did well. and then they sold that, and my mother, she started looking around and she found a place in Taylor, a little burned out shell of a house , but it had something like 13 lots to it, and she bought that and she was able to make her payments on it hold on to it.

R: This was back when, in the 50's? Or the early 60's?

G: 50's right, 50's. And she held on to it. Now Taylor wasn't built up.

R: no, that's what I'm saying.

G: Swamp area and woods.

R: Farm area? Or just...

G; no, woods, woods and swampy ground, And so,...

R: Let me share with you what I'm trying to do again...What I hope can occur over the next 6 to 8 months is that interview folks from the plant that have been there different numbers of years, had different kinds of jobs, different experiences, and their families and community, wether they live in the city or suburbs, that put together, through these interviews a series of articles and possibly abook that gives the American people a sense of the last generation of auto workers, because I think that's what we are, we are, we've been there 15 years, people come in with just a few years. But basically we're the last generation of auto workers that came up with rising, increased wages and a little more security, now it's going to be less and less security. I want folks to have a chance to share their story because I think everybody's story is real special. We'll see what we have when we finish with it. I don't know if it will match Lee Iaccoca's book or not in terms of the view of the auto industry, but we'll see.

G: Well, it will be interesting , it will be another view. You see, he's gonna have a view, first echelon from the top, down. First echelon management, down, right. And he's gonna be looking down what his picture is, he's got to look down through the profits and all the political moves and things upper management have to contend with and how they brought the auto industry along and their effect of it and unless they did extensive interviewing it would be still hard for him to get a good concept of what they're saying 'cause he can't really relate to it. Even though when he

was growing up, he may have worked on the farm or he may have done something, I don't know, but unless he's put in hours and years on the production line and come along and I doubt he has... he'll do all right with his book as far as some of the people are concerned, but he won't have the true picture or he won't have the same view as yours. You're right I think there's a big interest in this area and probably the rest of the country... Everybody already has a mental picture of the auto industry and you're just going to enlighten them a little bit.

R: waht do you think that picture is?

G: We'll come back to thiss... we'll work up to it...So anyway, my mother, she worked at Dixfield until I ws seven. I went to the elementary school. I think I changed schools... As Taylor grew I changed schools an average of every two years, sometimes it was every year I went to a different school. They build one up... I think I went to most of them. I started off at Taylor elementary and then I went to... From there, after two years there I went to Clarence Randall, a year there and then I went to Geeman and William\$ two years there back to Clarence Randall for a year. Then over to Little Pine School and then I went to Taylor Junior High School, then I went to BraitJunior High School. And then I finished off at Taylor Center High School. Ofcourse I always loved sports and I think that's how I was able to hold my interest and get through high school. I really was not ever overpowering or a dynamic student. The learning part was o.k. I tolerated it. There was no inter-hunger or desire. but I can remember when I started out I felt I was as intelligent or smart as anybody. And then slowly, as I came along and as I went through the competition with the other students, they kind of break that self image down, right. Like, they start the teacher in kindergarten giving out stars, like who can print their name, who did a good job doin this, or a good job doing that. I can remember thinking everything i did was excellent and no, it wasn't compared to this person over here, weel, it was maybe almost but not quite as good, you know, and then you start getting treated that way and before you know it most of the time is being spent with the already faster learnes, people who are catching on a little quicker, they start developing them along.

So, anyway, in the second grade I was held back because I was slow. But I was in a second and third grade split, first year I was in second grade. The teacher really had-ofcourse I didn't realize this when I was a kid-the teacher really had quite a job, because she now really had four divisions of students. She had her sharp third graders, her slow third graders, she had her sharp second graders and her slow second graders.

R: All in one class.

G: All in one class. she had a bout 30-35 students. How is she going to spend enough time with all those kids, right? So most just thing she could do was work with as many of them as she has time and hold those slow ones back, which was another blow to the self image. A kid never forgets that, but as you grow older you kind of learn how to accept it and put it in its perspective. It really isn't such a bad thing if you look at it from a positive side and I started doing that. I was only... even as a young boy them I realized I wasn't really as tall or as big as some of the other kids. I started early because it was advantageous to my mother. She had to work- where's the best place for me to be- in school. So we... while I was in school the teacher held myself and five or six others and that made it easier because I had my buddies, all the guys I fooled around with and played with, all my friends, we were the slow group, you see... as I rationalized this out to look at the good points, it gave me an extra years growth and it phsically let me compete physically on the right level with the children I was the same age , or slightly a little older. So, now it boosted my self image. I was no longer on the bottom, see, I was anywhere from the top to the middle and I didn't mind being in that level. I even sharpened up and competed scholastically in the average after that. So it was a good move. But I changed schools, that was the year I changed schools. I started off...and I changed schools adn now I lost all my credit-ability. I had to go someplace else and start all over again.. Everybody else stayed in the same school.

R: You stayed in the same house.

G: I stayed in the same house.

R: But they kept switching schools because Taylor was a growing suburbs of the 50's and 60's.

G: Right, Taylor was a growing community, they built the schools as they were required. So, as a result, Taylor started to grow and my mother started to unload these 13 lots. Let me see, there were 13 lots, there was a house and 13 lots. She kept 2, so she sold eleven, she sold eleven lots. In the essence, the house that we were living in had an outside toilet, there was no inside plumbing.

R: When you were growing up?

G: Outside toilet and no running water, there was no sewer. She carried the water, she carried the water, we used to stop and pick it up from the fire hydrant. Well, as Taylor is growing and the builders are buying up this property and they're building this up. She sells this property off in come the sewers, they're putting new sewers in cause they're building new houses all around, she unloads these lots, makes enough money on the eleven lots to pay for an addition to put on an extra bedroom, utility room, bathroom, got all the plumbing done, the addition and paid, paid everything off...

R: Cash

G: Cash, had a little money left over, I think she bought a newer car, and kept a double wide lot for our house. She came out good, she did the right things at the right time. There wasn't any pressure on her to work and provide things it was all pretty much just to try to maintain. I was seven years old and she had found a man that she cared for, and who cared for her and she remarried and continued to work and two years after that, she quit work and had my brothers and sisters. So I was really an only child.

R: For a long time.

G: yeah, for a long time

R: For how many years, now

G: For seven years. So anyway, everything went on a kind of an even pace for those years. Now I had a male figure in the home.

R: What kind of work did your stepdad do?

G: At the time that my mother meet him, he was just working for his brother-in-law, in the gas station. He was very intelligent man, but he was kind of... no, he had never been married before, he served in the war, went to school in Detroit. His mother and father

were from Croatia, his mother and father both died of cancer so they were both gone already. He was real artistic and secure with himself, nobody made any demands on him up until then, he kind of did things with the boys and this and that, but he was real sophisticated, he wasn't a wild partyer, he was never a drinker, he was a very good father figure at the house. He went to work every day.

R: Never missed a day

G: Never missed a day

R: That's where you got it from

G: He never missed a day, he would stay up and read, I'd get up sometimes and he'd be up at two or three o'clock in the morning, and he'd have to get up at seven to go to work. He wasn't employed when my mother got married but he found a job in Detroit, at Wrenhead Mason on one of the job ads that they needed intelligent, sharp people and they would train them as a lab technician. Now he probably took some kind of aptitude test and he did well on that. He's one of these kind of people that is not afraid of any task, no task is too big.

R: Are both your mom and your step-dad still alive?

G: Yes, and still together. I use to watch him, growing up. And he started to things to our house right away, he added additions, he had room to build, he built on the house, he went to work every day, he went to school at night. He'd take classes two nights a week go right from work to school, come home late. Mechanically inclined he could fix anything, if he knew nothing about it he'd get a book, read on it and fix it. ask for help?, uh,uh, no help he would not ask. Even if he needed , he expected somebody to see that he needed it and help him, but he wasn't asking, and if you didn't offer, no one would help, he would do it completely alone. He would devise a method to do it. It was all good, there was never any pressure on me as far as school or any thing was concerned. We ended up staying in that house, they still live in that house, it's huge now, and my grandmother lives with them.

R: Your mother's mother?

G: Yes, my mother's mother

R: Is she an immigrant, your mother's mother?

G: She was born here, she was born in the South and her father ran off and left her mother and her mother raised five kids I believe it was, during the depression by herself. Her father ran off, he was a horse man, he hung around the horse stables and racing stables, trained and worked with the horses, and one day he just left.

R: He ran with the horses.

G: He ran off with the horses, literally. It wasn't another woman or anything, he was off with the horses. The family life was too much. My grandmother had a lot to do with raising me, between that time when I was growing up, she would work sometimes, sometimes she wouldn't work, I'd spend a lot of time with her, and she'd constantly preach, don't waste your food, take care of the things you have. I didn't have a particular set of parents that was just geared from **one point of view**, I had so many different points of views and upbringings that different people had that they shared with me. My grandmother, and of course my mother, she was on the tail end of the depression, so she knew what it was like. But she was busy a lot of the time working, made it hard for her to really get in there and inject very much into my early years and my views or what I should be doing and how I should feel about it.

R: Not directly, but she did in her actions...

G: Right, so anyway...

R: What part of the South was your grandmother from?

G: Kentucky, and then they moved up to Ohio and into the city and she never did like that. Her mother was very strict, but she was able to teach manners and respect. My Grandmother and grandfather injected that into mother's and uncle's upbringing. Etiquette and table manners and a lot of values of parents and stuff that are gone, gone now, gone from the family. I didn't get as much as my mother and father got.

R: Would say those values are the ones that gave people a sense of their own pride, self worth, self respect?

G: Yes, yes I do.

R: Even your attitude towards work, you've maintained that in a real responsible way at the plant

G: Right. There's so much. There are so many different variables that affect a person's life and determine what a person is and

who they are and what their values are. They are all important, they all have a liile bit to do with it and unless you break them down and analyze them and think about it, it's really hard to believe that they've all had a little part in it. Because I did watch how hard it was for my mother to do things. After my step-father got settled in his job and got going, two years after that my mother was able to quit work and start another little family. I got a brother when I was nine and two, three years after that I a sister, I needed that, I wanted that, other kids had brothers and sisters, people to play with and I didn't. I felt that I was missing something sometimes. I spent alot of time alone, because there was nobody, everybody was gone. So who entertained me, sometimes there was no baby sitter, during the periods that my grandmother worked, she worked inthe afternooon, my mother worked during the day, she dropped me off at my grandmother's, my grandmother was sleeping at seven thirty, six o'clock in the morning, my mother had to be at work, so it was go in, be quiet, don't bother your grandmother she's got to sleep, somost of the time I never had breakfast, so what did I have for breakfast?, I had ceral, I could make cold ceral by my self, Kellog's cornflakes, great start in the morning. So what entertained me? the television. It had just come on the scence, still black and white, Howdy Doody, Captain Kangaroo, Milky the Clown, Soupy Sales at lunch time, Lunch with Soupy. and then those stupid soap opera would come on in the afternooon and I'd have to entertain myself with something else because I couldn't handle those soap opers even back then.. By then my grandmother would be up, so I'd have a decent lunch, but...

R: Did your grand mother live near you?

G: She lived over on... about three or four miles away. She lived in Taylor. As I got along, as I got older there, by the time I was seven and my mother was staying home, by eight, nine she already staying home, and I was already in about the third or fourth grade, and then the next year after that I finished off the fifth and sixth grade in the little elementary school, Pine School, which was brand new, just down the street I walked to it , I walked home, did all the sports and athletics there, and then I went to the junior high school. Because I spent so much time playing sports I was able to make the football team and the baseball team and those were very difficult for a person to make, and it gave me

just a liittle bit of status. I felt good about myself and did better in school, it drove me to do better. I really didn't intend to go to college, because I didn't like school, but the sports kept me in the ball game, so to speak, it kept my grades up. By the time I was in ninth grade, I began to realize that if I did decide to go to college, I would need a good high school record behind me, so I began to take the harder classes, the college prep classes. I was lucky enough to have a good start, in the eight and ninth grade, the school I was attending had more emphasis on doing wellin your studies. There was no physical punishment in this school, I felt relaxed and I did well. It was a newer junior high school, I don't know where the students parents worked, some were truck drivers, one boys father was a small farmer who also worked in the post office. I t just seemed to me that the social stratification at BraetJunior high school was a cut above Taylor Junior high school., the students were from a different background a different enviroment, and that just left a good learning enviroment.

G: now I have to rely on my scholastic ability. I took the SAT test. I sent my paperwork up to Northern, because I loved the woods and they had forestry and all that. They accepted me on probation, because I got a D- in chemistry. Also, in my senior year I fluffed in my algebra class, as far as I was concerned I was done, my football went down the drain. I was trying to figure out how I was going to go to college. From the tenth grade on I worked between the baseball and football seasons. I pumped gas at the same place those years I got into a very good relationship with the owner, I bought a car, an old car, I had two cars, the first was a 55 Mercury, extremely clean, leather interior, it cost me 55 dollars, I took it to the junior prom, it was a nice little car. Most of us had cars and most of us worked, the employment was good. Most of the able bodies were overseas, in the war. I worked on the weekends during the seasons, and after the season I would work after school, that was my spending money, my date money, fixed my car, whatever I needed, I took care of myself....

R: So you were getting out of high school, you applied to Northern Michigan, you get in on probation, then came that decision that July...

G: I had a teacher that I was close to, he was the varsity coach and he said to me, "You're not college material, you're going to end up working at Ford on the assembly line." That was the first time, the only one I can pinpoint, that I got a feeling for an outside view. Teachers are really good at this, of course these are the only people that I had any interaction with, as far as what are you going to do when you get done, what do you have to look forward to.

R: Your parents didn't put any pressure on you?

G: No, never.

R: Do you put any pressure on your kids?

G: I won't let them fail, there is no reason for failure. I stimulate my children and I put carrots out for them and let them go get it. I told them you get all A's I'll buy the car, you don't I won't buy it. My oldest would do it if the car was there or not, the others don't put that much significance on grades. I try to stimulate the desire. I told them if you can save 250 dollars, I would add 250 dollars and make it 500, if you can make that grow to 1000, I would add another 1000 and make it 2000. For 2000 dollars you can buy a pretty decent car. So, they have two ways to get what they want.

G: he mentioned that I wasn't college material that I was going to end up at Ford. I thought about that, it didn't bother me, I never really knew how to take what he was saying, I never really completely understood if it was a challenge or whether he was just telling me his view of me. I had enough confidence in myself to know if some one told me I couldn't do something, I was going to do it, even if it was just to prove him wrong.

It turns out that I didn't get a scholarship, and I was hoping for one. My mother says if I want to go to college and they can't afford it, she would go back to work. I thought about this a long time, I didn't want any pressure to perform, I wanted to do it myself. I had a little bit of fear in there that I might go to college and I might not be able to keep up with a full curriculum, and if I drop below a C average, you're out, and if you don't carry a full load you're not a fulltime student and there is no draft deferment. I didn't want my mother to work and all this time I didn't give any thought of paying it myself, I always counted on the scholarship. I didn't prepare for the financial burden of school costs, it never entered my mind. One of the fellows that I worked with at the station, he goes down.... we're working fulltime at the gas station, all of a sudden he up and quits, so I ask him, why did you quit?, he's going to Olivette, a private school, and he has a scholarship and he has to come up with some of the cost himself. He went down to Fisher Body and got a job, he told me to go down and apply. So I go down there, I get on my sport coat, my grey pants, my white shirt, the only way to apply for a job, I never heard of any other way. I walk in the door of the employment office and they got all these people in blue jeans and regular pants and shirts, tee shirts... it didn't realize I was in the right place. This guy comes up to me and I tell him I'm looking for an application, I wanted to apply for a job, and he asks me if I want salaried or hourly employment, it never even occurred to me... I probably would have never been able to apply for a salaried position, I have no idea how that would have worked out, in my opinion of it, it would have been a flop, so I said hourly, and then he asked me the most critical question... he says is this going to be part time or full time and I said fulltime, and he says, do you have plans to go to school and I said, Oh, yes sir, what other answer is there, yes I'm going to college, what kind of person would they want to hire but some one that was going to school,

G: getting ahead, going to be smart, you want smart people. Oh, no, they don't want the smart guy. Oh, he says well that's part time employment, we're not hiring part time people right noe, we're only hiring full time people. ARE you kidding me" I said, " I got friends that are coming down here, that got jobs and are going to college" He said," well, they lied to me because I'm not hiring any one that I'm going to lose. I was soo upset, so I said to him, well them I'm not going. He said , that's not fair, I already asked you.

I was so upset, I knew I wasn't going to make any money at that gas station, it was over 1000 dollars roomand board. I was making 3 dollars an hour, I added it up , there wasn't even enough hours between now and when school started to make a 1000 dollars. So, I sais to my self that does it, I went right from there to Dearborn on Michigan Ave. to the draft induction center and said " I'm ready. I want to go, how soon can I go", I had to get this burden of the military off my back so I could get on with my life. The lady told me if I had a call in two weeks would that be enough time? I said yes, it was enought time. Nobody was to know execpt my self and the lady at the draft board the I volunteered to go. In the interim there was this pressure in the back of my mind, with the collge, the preparation and how I was goin to handle it things got a little tight, I'm becoming a mature adult, my mother still liked a little bit of that control. My girlfriend was going away to college, how was I ever going to handle that, I'm madly in love, she was going to Eastern. I knew that the GI bill would handle the financial end of my education comfortabely, no pressure, no time, I was going to be on easy street! and have a good time going to college when I got done. I even gave a little thought, well, what if I let my mother put me through school, I'd wash out, get drafted, go over there, I get blown away, it was all wasted, what's the sense in doing that, let's get it over with.

I went eight weeks basic training, Fort Knox. People said to me, never volunteer for any thing, I tried to keep that in mind, I tried to get as many tips as I could. Doggone, if I didn't volunteer for everything, but I had good reason to volunteer.. Most everyting I volunteered for meant that I had to go for more training, the more training I had the more time I spent stateside, the more time I spent stateside the better the odds were of getting through my two years.

G: 1970, April 15th, I came home, I was out, I was on my way home. In the interim, my girlfriend, which is now my wife, we got married and we had a child. so when I came out, my situtation had changed from when I went in. I was going to go in, get the service out of the way, go to school and now I come out and the girl I was worried about being away from was now my wife. So, now I had every-thing I wanted, I done two things good, I had the woman that I wanted and I had the military obligation out of the way, but now I had to support a family. I started off, I worked at Farmer Jack's for three months and the pay was very undesirable, there was no motivation, on 100 bucks a week, forty hours, I could not buy a house, my wife was working at K-Mart and our two measely little incomes did not allow us to be economically supportive of ourselves. so for three months we're between... we stayed at her family's a couple of weeks and then at my family's, it got to be a strain on the relationship. I wasn't knocking my self out at Farmer Jack's so they layed me off, they would've liked to fire me, but they layed me off.

When I got layed off and was home, I heard that they were opening a new parts plant down on Pennsylvania Avenue. So I go down there and I'm still in my dress clothes and I've got a different attitude, I fill out the application I give this guy the application and here comes the questions, same questions, "Are you looking for part time or full time employment?" "Fulltime", "Do you plan on going to school?", "yes, sir I do", he says, "~~That's part time~~" I said, "No, I plan on going to school part time, I'm looking for full time employment, I've already been through the service and i've got the GI bill and I intend to use it." He says, " I'm sorry I can't hire anybody that's ever going to school."

What ever happened to honesty is the best policy, I said, "Look. I intend on going to school, I'm married, I have a child, I have responsibilities, I have to have a good job and I plan on goig to school part time, what other kind of person do you want working fo you?", He said, " well, wait a minute let me go talk to my boss," he comes back and says, "I'm sorry, I can't touch anybody going to school." I walked out of there I didn't know if I was ever going to get a job., I drove all the way out to Saline and applied to th

plastics plant, I said, my gosh somebody's got to need a good person somewhere. I filled out two applications there, the hourly and the salary, I didn't care what it was for, I was sure I could do it, they weren't hiring there, one of the first times ever that they had to lay people off and hadn't called them back. So I went home this all took place in less than a two week time period. I ran into a neighbor she said that her husband worked at the truck plant, he was on salary, Barney Barkley and he gave me a referral card. I went down there, filled out the application, they had me come back in a couple of hours and take the physical and the one of the questions was right there and the guy said, "Are you going to school", I said, "No, I don't have any plans on going to school" and I said, "how come you can't hire anyone who is or who might want to go?" and he said, "Because it costs so much to train them and they leave right away." I said "Well, I would think you would want people who were interested in education, that you would want smart people to work for you." "It's a funny thing," he said, "We can't hire any one in school or has any plans on going to school, but after you've worked six months or a year, if you decided to go to school on a part time basis, we'll help pay for it." I said that was a good piece of information, but I wasn't breathing a word that I was going to school.

August 20th, 1970. I walked in, Woody was there, the personnel manager, I guess, he filled out all the paper work, "You're going to make more money than I do, He said, "But the only difference is that your going to earn it. And I'm thinking, " It's about time, I need it so desperately, the pressure, I wasn't providing, I was included as a full member of the establishment, had all the responsibilities already but I hadn't reach the level that I needed to be at. We were told to come in at 3 o'clock to start the paper work, and we were already getting paid we were starting work at 5:42, I went down on line two and worked for Seymour. I started putting pop rivets on the back of the cab, the two-toned for the trim that goes along the side and across the back. It was only half an operation, which I didn't realize at the time. I was able to do it, I had to hustle, but I was able to do it and keep up, and I said, boy, this is great, and they were paying me. We worked 11 to 5 and that was 15 hours and that was a Friday, the next day was Saturday and it was a 9 hour day.

And i was loving it, the first week I'd take home 180 dollars after taxes and the was only for two days. I raised my arms up and said Yahoo, I found it! that was it! I found an apartment for 150 dollars a month, went down there with my mother, paid the first month rent paid the security deposit. Called my wife up at her mother's and told her I rented an apartment, she was elated. She was stayed at her mother's while I wasn't working, it was a strain.

R: Did she blame you for that?

G: no., she didn't blame me, it was just hard.

R: Did you blame your self?

G: NO, I didn't blame myself, but I felt very furstrated that I was caught in that position. And especially when I had blown a good jo b after telling the truth twice in a row. I was the perfect example of the all American boy, I wasn't down on the farm, it was suburbia, ther wasn't alot of apple pie, but it was a good family life, it was broken up a little, but the rest of it was solid, I didn't see where I did anything wrong. Amyway I finally made it, I finally learned how to get around the obsticals, too bad I had to lie about my personal intentions, but I did what I needed to do to get the job. Well, I went to work, and I did the job and I didn't miss a day. I took one day off to go to a wedding and that was it. We moved into the apartment, I furnished it, we needed everything, put us on a budget, started saving and then started lookin for a house. I did not want to be in that apartment for more that a year,I sighed a one-year lease. The overtime was allowing me to save, the money, support us, give us allwe need.

R: What did you make the first year?

G: The first year,I made about six or seven thousand, but I started in August, the next year, I made 12.500

R; What did you make last year?

G: Last year I made 54,000.00 but I worked all the over time available, you see, I'm very materialistic, nad I'm a goal setter, and I'm a planner and I was back then I stared making these plans: I want to do this, but if I can't do this, I'll settle for this or this. I start off working at ford in the afternoon and I get set up and within the first year I apply for my VA loan and a find the sub-division here, It's a little closer to work, I can just about afford it and I figure, after I get us in here....

R: Has she been teaching?

G: She's been subbing for six years... no permanent position has opened up

R: It should be opening soon

G: They say that but teachers that have left the field have to offer the chance to come back when the positions open up, if they decide to come back then there may not be as big a shortage as they think there might be.

My situation really changed, I was in, I was established. Now I have a new view of the factory environment, people come of all kinds of situations, the hourly employees. The salary employees too, there seemed to be a definite side, I never took a side, I went there to do a job, I kept my sights on what I was going to do, what I went there for, I went there for the paycheck, everything else was insignificant, the most important thing was that I would do for them what they wanted and I was to get what I wanted, I wanted the money, take the money away, I'm not staying, if they're paying I'm staying, as simple as that, and that's my reward. I'm meeting people and I'm observing, the easier jobs pay the same, the easier jobs are more desirable, why work harder than you have to do, try to get the easier, more comfortable job, making the same amount of money, getting the job done, but making it as easy as you can. Intelligence didn't quite come into play unless you were salary, you weren't really part of the decision making process, just the labor part. Everyone from the management end made the decisions, you didn't have any part in the decisions, you had no responsibility.

I didn't feel that it would have enough stimulation economically, I felt I could always do better somewhere else, doing something more. I went from high school wanting to go into forestry, doing what I wanted to do, I went from that to doing what I had to do to give me a financial reward... the teachers always made little of the factory workers, manual unskilled laborers.. I worked in a supermarket, I went in a white shirt bow tie, dress pants, I worked with public, was that rewarding, no, no pay, what was rewarding to me was what I took to the bank and the benefits were nothing. So I come into the Ford plant and I don't have to deal with the public, I don't have to talk to this truck if I didn't want to, I didn't even have to talk to the guy next to me, I could hardly hear him with all the rumble and roar. I can sit there and just

program my body to do the physical process of what I have to go through to assemble this truck or vehicle and let my mind drift anywhere I want to go...I found something I could do well enough, fit in, please the amangement, work the overtime. If the overtime had not been there, i would have maybe been not as comfortable in the job. It was meeting my requirements, but I didn't want to stay there. I wanted more. I felt that college was a requirement of society and I see these salaried workers, and I'm thinking darn, I can start off at the bottom, I can go to college, I can get a degree, I can change sides, I can go on salary, become part of amangemnt, there is promotion available, there is some futrue, this isn't so unbearable, it isn't so bad, I can possibly climb the ladder and make some money doing this . So I went to college, but I still had my high goals, I set my sights on a lawyer.

as I set out for this law, pre-law, I needed to take a course major to challenge me enough to prèpare me for law school, to test me to see, if I really had the requirements. I had some doubt about myself, but I want to go for it, because I know ,I want the money, that's what I'm going for. I would rather go for something and fail that was worth something rather than go for something that had a nice title and no financial reward, I didn't need that, the title I don't need the money I need.

R: You were getting use to it already, especialy working all the over time...we made more in our third year, than I grandparents made in a life time and our parents in a few years combined.

G: Now I'm taking all this into account, I'm analyzing this. I have no pressure, once I'm out the door I don't even give it another thought until I go back

R: Did you get friendly with any of the folks at the plant, was that important?

G: I did, but I didn't...

R: Well, you already had family...

G: I never had that, I didn't have that...There was a short time there in the afternoons when I would stop off and have coffee after work, that lasted about two or three months then I didn't do that anymore it was makin it hard for me to sleep. Very little social life, there were only a few individuals, for a short time, that I would see outside the plant. Because I went to school and that, I was always busy, I had some of my friends telling me I must have a boring life, I only worked and went to school. I didn't see it as boring, what else is

there? I didn't care about going to play no softball game, I played sports all through high school, I'd already done enough of that, didn't need the social life, recreational activities. I had my sights on a different goal.

R: So you weren't home much for the kids...

G: no, and I didn't figure it was gonna hurt me, or I didn't think I was missing anything while they were young. But I wanted to have all this education out of the way and be very well established in my new career by the time they were in junior high school, I figured by that time I would take back over with them, I want to be their father, I want to be their friend, I want to be there buddy, too. All of that, I want to play baseball with them... I want to teach them so much. So I swapped that, I went to school part time for over ten years. Ten years, I worked 58 hours a week and I went to school 2 nights a week, and I went through and got all my liberal arts out of the way, I can major and minor in anything I want. But the classes are getting harder. I go for an accounting major, because I see there are three stratification levels to that, if I can't go to law school from there with an accounting degree, then I can sit the state CPA exam and they do very well, they have specialties, they have tax, you can go into tax law, and if that didn't work out, if I couldn't handle that, I could just settle to be an accountant. And later on, after that I got just a little spark of interest in the computer part of the technology, I was an accounting major and a computer major, you have two skills you can handle..

R: Sounds like you were trying to market yourself

G: Right, I was always thinking of how to market myself, stay marketable. Nobody could say, hey, tha's it, because what happens if this job is not there

R: There is always that possibility

G: Right, what are you prepared to do? Can you survive? Who are the survivors, will we all survive and how much of a change will that make in your life? Economically, and socially...The thoughts of that use to just drive me. Around 1978 I'm finishing up the accounting and the courses are hard, I'm struggling with the overtime and I figure, the heck with it, there's a promotion coming up, maybe I can handle salary and go to school. Between 78 and 80 I passed one class.

R; Did you like salary?

G: I did, but I was not the organizational man. The organizational man is devoted to the organization, that's it, he lives for it, his life evolves around it. Mine was still a direct shot to my own personal goals. I wanted to the job and leave, I wanted to just give them what they were paying for, I wanted to come home. I had no problem, I followed the guidelines, I'd go by the book of rules, I didn't have to bend them, I didn't have to do whatever, but I just wanted to come home on my time and be with my family. I didn't want to participate, go to the parties, and the picnics, I didn't need any of that. On the hourly part with the union and that I was grateful, glad we had it, somebody has to do that type of work too, I didn't want that. the job was a vehicle to my end goals.

R: Do you still think you're getting out?

G: I still thought I was gonna leave....by the time i would finish my degree, I thought I could sit the state test and pass it, after I got through with the CPA part I figured I still go to law school, for tax law or something, I might give that a try, or I might not, I might develop a family business, these are still possibilities, they could still happen. 1980 they had a cut back and I went back on hourly. Now I see the company control is different, a salaried person is subjected to puppetism, you're there, you have instructions that come down from upper echelon management and that's it, you don't question it, you have very little input still. When I took this position in salary, there were a lot of reasons, but one of them was I didn't really like the way things were being run. So how do I change it? I have to get control of it to change it, if I don't have control, I can't change anything. So I was going to structure things the way I WANTED THEM TO RUN and as zone supervisor, almost has little of that authority, but very little, I found out how very little he does have. Now after I'm there, it's a little bit late to change so I kind of become molded into what they want. I can keep the place moving and I can keep it going, I get along with the people I keep the people content a little bit and take care of their needs. As the problems arise I solve them for them. I become their problem solver and I get their job done. that allows me to stay there and fit in with salary...what ever they wanted I gave them, wholeheartedly....

R: They paid that much more for salary?

G: The slary pay was significant, yes. It was not that much more, but it was significant because I wasn't going to put in the number of hours in that the people on hourly were putting in to make as much, they were going to make as much and sometimes more, but I didn't have to put the hours in to do it. I made, by the time you added cost of living, five, maybe six thousand dollars more which to me was sinificant. But it cost me, I lost two years of my college, I lost because I only passed one class because they would change sift in the middle of my semester and when they did that alot of times I had to change instructor or go to a different day time thing and it might not have been in the schedule and it cost me. Educationally I lost, and when they had to cut back in eighty now I was finacially cut too, I'm back on hourly and we're working one week, taking two off, work another week, taking two more off and I couldn't afford to go. Even if Ford was paying for the class tuition they only reimburse you, you have to come up with the up front money, then you have to pass it and if you didn't, they see you grade, they're still not paying.

R: Now they're paying.

G: Now it's alittle different, I think they're more up front with it, but it wasn't that way then, so I just lost sight of it for a while I took a break. It was hard, I got depressed. I get within three classes of completing the major and within 90 credit hours, ten classes of graduating, so close.

R: That's were it is now

G: That's were it is now, it's set, since then...

tape 11 sidell

I took an auditing class, I should have taken another class before that, but to my surprise I passed it, which gave me a little motivation. It was telling me that if I wanted to go back to school I could do it, I still had it. I did make some head way, but it still wasn't what I wanted to do., I still wasn't what I wanted to be. so as I'm taking some of these college classes, over the ten years, some people where saying why they were college, because the don't want to work in the factory, and I'm laughing at them, because I'm going to college, and I'm working in the factory, and I'm driving a new car and they're driving junk, I'm living in a house and they're renting an apartment, I've got three kids, I'm supporting my wife, she's going to school, I'm going to school, and we're hardly hurting for anything and they're belittling the people that work in the factories and I've got Blue Cross and they're going down to the clinic. I didn't see what they were laughing at , I didn't see anything degrading about a hard honest days work, I wasn't being punished, and I didn't have any special skills, or any special traing, no scholastic requirement to do what I was doing. I just had enough desire to putin a hard days work.

R: It's 1985, how do you see the next 5, 10 years around the job, aroud your family. There are rumors around the plant that they might be shutting down and we may have enough seniority to squeeze by, maybe. How do you see that your son is fourteen, they have 20,000 troops in and out of Hounduras, give some thoughts on you future, what are your dreams.

G; when I went through college some of my most interesting classes were sociology and psychology because they really rounded out and gave me self confidence and secure feling with myself, I've always been a secure person with my self, I know what I'm worth, sometimes I think I'm worth more than I am, and sometimes I think I'm worth less than I am, but it averages out. Iknow that part of the reason that I have come the long way that I have is that certain levels of society respond differently to their environment, the people who are in the upper income bracket, upper class, don't have to make any plans they're all ready economically set up, if he wants a new car, he goes out and buys a new car, what ever he wants, it's there already, the middle class, which is a wide range, your bottom middle class and your upper middle class are planners, they have to have a plan, the people who are lower class don't make plans either, I'm not talking exceptions, I'm talking majority, there are always exceptions, they don't plan

because they are so use to being where they're at that they have very little hope of changing their situation or their control. A person that has nothing has nothing to pass on , if you have nothing and if it is totally ou of reach there's no motivation..

one third of the population will do the same as their parents, one third will surpass them and one third will fall below. So what do I have in the back of my mind, what immedialtely comes tomy mind? I've got to go as far as I can go, the farther I can go, I've got one thrd a chance that they're going to catch me, I've got two thirds a chance that they're going to catch me or do better and I've got one third a chance that they're going to fall below, so the farther I go, even falling below might not be so bad. I've given that some creative thought, the burden is on me, I've put the burden on me, don't put it on them.

I'm gearing right now I'm programming my family, the next 5 years... I owe thm, ask any one of themI owe them, a set of skis a computer, a new car, so I'm already telling them. My sister-in-law and her husband in 1980 moved to California, work was tough here, he's got a lot of skills, tool and die, been plant manager, been all over, alot of experience, goes off to Calf. works for Nothrop, making government aircraft, he's doing alright, my sister-inlaw has to work, cost of living is real high, but he's made a nice change. I send the kids out there for the summer, we switch kids back and forth, my son says, "Dad, let's go live in Califoria", I said look son I'd love to, but I;m not prepared to go out there and work in that economy, my job does not go with me, it's here, I can't live anywhere I want to, my job is here, look around you, everything that we have is because I gave it to you, I'm trading my life for a dollar, more hours of my life that I give them, that's availble, I get more dollars.

R: Do you have any regrets?

G: Yeah,...It's hard, and I tell them ,I say, look, everything I had and everything you see and count on me for will not be there for you. It's gone, that job is gone, society is changing, It's changing from a manufacturing and laboring society to a technological and information society, you have to prepare yourself now, right now you lay the foundation in your life for your career. Where ever you want to live...if you want to have control, as much control as possible over your life, you have to prepare yourself now, it's important, you have to learn the skills, when

you go to school and play with your friends, you can have fun, but do it in the proper place, when you're in class get the tools you need, you've got it coming to you, they're not forcing it on you, you have that coming, you get what you need to go on so you can be your own person. A professional person or a skilled person takes their job with them, a laboring person or an unskilled person, their job dictates to them where they live and how they live, they don't have the control.

R: Do you think you're going to retire?

G: I never wanted to retire from Ford, and now I'm glad that Ford has retirement.

R: What do you think the industry is going to look like in 14 years?

G; Retirement, 15 more years to go, maybe 20 in my case. How Ford will be I'm not sure... that's too far, it maybe great, then again, it might not be so great. Right now I don't want to think that I'll have to depend on Ford for retirement,... My wife has her teaching degree, I can possibly... Now I have taken some time off... I'm in a spot with my children at my age, If I squander the time now, it's gone forever, what ever goes by now is lost. We played softball, I coached a little girls softball team, I trained with my son for the wrestling team, we go motorcycling in the woods, we go hunting together. If I don't spend this time with them now it's gone forever, I can't ever get it back. I gave all those young years up when they were doing things that I had too much energy and I couldn't handle, I'm trying to give them as much time now. I haven't lost sight of the fact I can still finish...I can take the time I need and finish my degree .

R: Do you have a lot of savings? Is the house paid off?

G; No it's not paid off, but it's not out of reach. I could pay it off but I'm going to use the money to put a nice sizable down payment on the new house.

R: How much are the new house payments going to be?

G: Close to seven, eight hundred dollars, that is going to change...I pay now, three twenty...it's going to eat up a bunch of my spendable income. I have teenagers, in their most expensive years I'm going to do that. But I feel that I'm making the change to put them in the most comfortable, education environment, to better prepare them in a better environment to finish their education off and prepare them for college. The possibility is, if I gear them right and I motivate everyone right, we could possibly someday, the wildest dream, someday have our own

family CPA firm, accounting firm. There's nothing saying that one might go into computers, be heavy into programming, one might go into law or tax, the girls are as equally challenged in this area as anybody. My wife could come into this field. We could start a family business in anything as long as I have everybody prepared.

Times always change, society is always changing. Technology is the basic stimulation for the change. Now people aren't having big families, they're planning small, two, three children and that's it.

there was an agricultural revolution, we went from an agricultural society to a machine society, city dwellers, big revolution. There may again be a major kind of revolution to a technological society ... it's still advanced. ..because it's very important that government and society recognizes and somehow shares its wealth. See, that's the biggest thing in our country, the majority of the wealth is controlled by a minority of the population. But, it has to be big enough of it shared to satisfy a majority of the population...it goes out of balance, you have revolution, because as soon as you have more people with poverty, in the low end, no middle area, and a bit in the other end, people aren't going to... don't have it... and it's tough

R: Look at your children... are your brothers and sister's children in the same secure place? Are the guys at work children? They're children are working two Burger King jobs, when I go to Dunkin' Donuts, there are older guys working...they're working the lunch shift, and they're not fifty years old, they're senior citizens and they're not doing it for something to do...

G: Some are, they're bored, they're still productive...I know what you're talking about. What about the person who had the nice job, that was in my position and then all of a sudden he was..., it was gone. He can't go and say look I have all this talent and I can do... and there is no spot for him. My heart aches for him. Because he didn't plan, he didn't get himself ready. And that is where you get into your survive and your non-survivor, into your reward and punishment.

R: Are you Catholic?

G: No.

R: Lutheran?

G: Raised Lutheran, but since high school I haven't...

R: You go to church?

G: No

R: What kind of moves do you go to? Do you go to the show?

G: Very little, we got this stupid VCR, we've must of watched a hundred movies in the last three months... I grew up with T.V., in the T.V. era, that was where I spent most of my time, my lonely years, the T.V. was my friend. I got a lot of life out of the television some of it is storybook some of it isn't. Plus I lived out there sometimes uncontrolled.

R: Do you believe in God?

G: Yes, sir. I believe in God. I feel thankful, I fell that he has watched over me. Because as you look back you think, so many things could have gone wrong. I have so much to be thankfull for that I feel very, very guilty about asking for anymore. So do I pray and ask for more, no. Yeah, am I grateful for what I've got...

R: What is your greatest obstacle to your planning... And what is your greatestfear?

G: My greatest obstacle is probably myself. I know that I can do almost anything. I am a perfect person for the plant and factory work because it takes very little to entertain me, as far as the daydreaming and T? watching, I've been programmed real good. On the other hand, I'm not content to do that all the time, I'm a physical person...

R: Do you find the job hard and tiring and exhausting?

G: No, I was an athlete, I'm still in great shape, I get out and run now, I lift the weights, I stay...you can be good, you can go and you can work on a particular job, and be conditioned for that, but if you change that and do something else, your in for a terrible shock...

R: You keep in shape...

G: I keep up with the kids and do other things I walk in the woods, and I entertain and play within the family, I don't get out and play with the guys, someday maybe I will, maybe I won't. I have very little time left if I don't spend it with my family, it's wasted as far as I'm concerned. With staying in shape I was always able to go and work and drift off or whatever, and just go through the skills...

R; What's your biggest fear?

G; My biggest fear is that some unforeseen tragedy would befall us. It would devastate me to lose one of my family members. I accept the fact that everyone is going to die. I don't want to see my son go fight in a war. I feel like they played with my life. I went voluntarily, I went whole heartily, and I believed in what I was doing and they just up and walked out of there, all of those lives wasted, in Vietnam, all that for nothing. And they played with my life. I would have never protested that, because I could never stand the thought of all the people that I knew and all the people that I didn't know that died for nothing, no, I was embarrassed over that.

Now I remember what I was going to say before we drifted off on the tangent. I tried to concentrate on the things that I can control and I can change, things that I cannot control, the things I can't change, I don't dwell on that. I will take that as it comes along. So, I don't sit and I don't worry...I was in the Amway, I'm still in it, it's a great experience, everybody ought to get into it. Everybody ought to go through the training and the seminars and all that, because the training tapes, because the motivational speakers that speak are so enlightening that they could help anyone anywhere...

R: Does it matter, you may not know that Amway makes such a great contribution to supporting the war effort in...

G: It doesn't make any difference because I cannot change that...

R: I don't want to get too political...

G: That's alright, I respect that, I fought for your right to say to believe, to think however you want, ...But anyway in there they said loo, set aside an hour a week for worrying, just one hour. When that hour comes up, you go some place, in a little room here and you worry. Worry about anything you want, but don't spend anytime worrying until that day and that hour and just go in there and worry. When that hour and day comes up to go worry and there is nothing to worry about, all these things that you were going to worry about are already taken care of and you don't have to worry about them anymore, well, just right on by and do something constructive with that hour and wait til next week to worry about it.

R: Did your wife do Amway too?

G: She supported me, she was still going to school, she didn't gang-busters into it.

R: Do you feel that, your served in Vietnam, that was you're responsibility as a citizen? That's it, you don't have any responsibility anymore

G: No, I feel like I paid my debt to my responsibility to support my country. I made my contribution to..I supported the country, I supported my patriotism, I paid my patriotism to my country, I'm patriotic. I don't feel that I actually have any requirement to believe as the rest of the country does. Patriotism doesn't always mean you agree with everything that is going on. I have my own views. nobody wants a war, most of the people in this country, or the ones in control realize that there is another way and now they're trying to deter that somewhat. They still like to stay in control, cause that's how they deter it. I don't want to be a weak nation, I don't want to have that because once you're not in control, that's it, the threat of force, yeah, but let's say the threat of force isn't always the best way, it's a positive way. The threat of it, the possibility of it, we were raised on it, families have been nurtured on it for centuries. If you go out in the neighbors pumpkin patch and steal a pumpkin and he catches you, I'm going to bust your ass., So you walk by the pumpkin patch and think maybe, maybe not, what is the deterrent, the threat of that force.

R: Also, the principle of the value that your family says that's the other person's pumpkin patch.

G: That is nice, but it doesn't deter it, and the other part is from the personal experience of having something that you truly appreciate have worked hard for and somebody else has abused, now you have a direct relationship between and a compassion for how somebody else feels, how they feel about that pumpkin, you know because you've experienced it, you've lived it, and now you know, and that is the best deterrent. The threat of force is only a start, only a small part of it. What we have here, when you step outside...cultural shock, everybody in the world doesn't believe like we do, they don't have the respect for the life, they don't place the standard, they don't miss what we've got, they don't even know about it, so they don't want it. They want to live, they want to eat, and they want to go on with what makes they're lives happy.

R; You respect that

G: Right, I've learned about that

R: Through school or Vietnam?

G; Partially both, through working, we have foreigners, you talk to them, you ask them about this, you ask them about that, the same words here

doesn't mean the same there, cultural shock. You go over there and say the same thing here or mean one thing and you've insulted someone. You have to take some learning with you, You take a picture here, it's alright, you go over to some country, you take a picture, they are going to bust your camera, beat you up, pull the film out and you're lucky if you don't go to jail, because they don't believe that it was alright what you've done. I don't want to leave the country Do I want to go tour the world? No I don't, it would be nice if I could, Americans are not welcome, on the same respect, it don't hurt my feelings, I don't feel very good about them either, and that's a wide range of countries, I think they're barbarians, I think they're uneducated, I feel bad for them. Can I change that, no I can only control myself. You know I like that one little Bible verse, it's so true and fitting, the one that says, " grant me the serenity to understand the things I cannot change, the power or courage to change the things I can and the knowledge to know the difference" It's something like that. Yeah, I understand them, but I don't dwell on them, I cross that road when I come to it, I try to prepare for them, I respect that they could happen and I don't want to be caught short.

And to get back to the other Question, no I don't want to depend on ~~FORD~~ Ford. In five years my kids graduate, if I prepare them properly , I'm home free. My wife and I will survive, we don't need this house, we don't need that house, we'll survive. If my kids are prepared, if I can't send them to college and they want to go, if it is laid properly, they'll go.

SHALLENBARGER

A So I went down to the induction center and the lady told me okay she said if you had a call in two weeks would that be enough time? I said yep that'll be enough time.

Q Was your family glad that you were enlisting?

A No they didn't know. I didn't enlist I volunteered for the draft. There is a big difference. Enlistment was three years and voluntary draft was two just like anybody else, Nobody was to know other than myself and the lady at the draft board that I volunteered to go. In the interim there was this pressure that I had been carrying around right cuz this has been in the back of my mind, the college, the preparation you know, how I was going to handle it. Things got a little tight. I'm becomeing a mature adult right? I'm at home. My mother is having trouble, just a little bit. She did a good job, but she still wants a little of that control, exercise a little control so my girlfriend was going to a different college than I was going, how was I ever going to handle being away from her. I was madly in love you know at the same time.

Q Where did she go to school?

A She was going to Eastern and she was going to stay at home. You know, commute. I was going to go to Northern and it was going to be a pitiful situation. I didn't know if I could make myself study when I got there. So when I opted to go and get this thing with the service all the way I had, I knew that the G.I. bill would handle the financial end of my college education comfortably with no pressure, no time, nothing. I was going to be on easy street and have a good time going to college when I got done. I even gave a little

thought boy what if I let my mother put me through school and I wash out, I get drafted, I go over there, I get blown away, it was all wasted you know. What is the sense in doing that? Let's go get that out of the way first. Am I going to live or die? Let's get that out of the way.

Q Did you think like that?

A I guess I respected the possibility but I never thought it was going to happen to me. Even when I was a child watching an army picture and older people who fought in wars and would talk of wars and say yeah I had a brother or an uncle so and so died in this war or that war, I used to think that'll never be you.. That'll never happen to me. If I was ever in a war it would never be me. So anyway, when I went into the induction center, the notice come in the mail and I was leaving in two weeks. My father took me up north to see his side of the family and then I said good-bye to everybody and I was gone. I went eight weeks basic training.

Q Where did you go?

A Fort Knox yeah. Then I went, because somebody always said they always talked to me these people who had been in the service they said never volunteer for anything. You get in trouble doing that. So I kept that in mind. I try to get as many tips whenever I am going to do something new I want to talk to anybody I can that's ever had this experience before me because maybe just maybe they can save me from a hard lesson. So doggone if I didn't volunteer for everything. I had good reason for that because most everything I volunteered for meant that I had to go for more training and the more training I had the more time

I spent in the states, state side. The more time I spent in the state side the better off my odds were getting that I could have lived through this two years. Despite the fact that I would be better prepared for whatever the situation that was going to befall me. So I volunteered for jump school. It just so happened well when I volunteered for jump school now I had to go to a special infantry training outfit and I was one of the only people that got a two week leave right after basic training because of that because the new school didn't start for two weeks. So when I was in this advanced airborne infantry training I volunteered for this NCO school. Now that's another ten to twelve week course. Plus after that there is so many nine weeks of OJT.

Q What is OJT?

A On the job training you know where you go and you train these other AIT units. So there was more training. Before I went to NCO school I went to jump school. So now I have been to basic training, I've been to infantry training, two weeks in between, I went to jump school and then I got pneumonia but I got through jump school which was four weeks. Then it got rained on. Well it doesn't matter whether it rained or not. So I got sick. So I spent a week in the hospital which separated me from everybody that was moving along with me went to NCO school. They started an earlier program and I had to start one that was a little later and they weren't starting until after Christmas. So I went out of the hospital and come home for Christmas. I go back after Christmas and they are not starting up for another

week. So I got a week in between when I'm not doing nothing. Then that starts up and I went through that and then I got all through with NCO school and I'm going to go overseas. Well I almost burned up a year right here state side. So I know that the army is giving people that come home from Vietnam with less than six months an early out. That's it end of your required service time. You come right home. If you had six months or more you serve it state side. So I'm burning all this time up. I've gone over there as air-born infantry.

Q Were in the 101st?

A No. That's just what I was qualified for. So I go over there and I spend a week in the induction center and I don't know where I am going to end up. What am I going to end up doing? One outfit was just second of the eighth armored personal outfit was just hit heavy and had a lot of live casualties and lost a lot of people.

Q This was already in '69?

A This is '69, yeah Christmas '69. So I'm wondering what is going to happen and this guy comes from long-range reconnaissance outfit, this airborne ranger outfit, and I'm in the fourth infantry division which means no jump all right? I also had my eye on the dollar. I wanted to make as much money as I could make during this time period. So when I got home I had a little money. I wanted to make this a paying proposition, this service time. They give you everything you need. You didn't have to spend a nickel. So I listen to this guy talk and he is telling me that you go on four man patrols, you go way out into the jungle and you get

dropped off. Just you and three other guys. You are going to snoop and poop out in the jungle. Everything is quiet and you got to have all these special skills and that and he is only going to pick just a couple people out of this whole thing that wants to volunteer for. So when he said that you go out for four days and then you come back in and you have what they have a thirty-six hour stand down. It means nothing. You were required to do nothing. If you wanted to sleep the whole time. Do whatever you wanted to do. Spend it in the little bars or the clubs they call them or just do nothing, nobody would bother you for the time period. Then you had to get ready for your next mission. Right after that you had to get your stuff all prepared and be ready for your new briefing and they had a standard operation procedure, that code set up right? You didn't move between these eleven and one because those were hours where they figured the NVA and the VC were sitting down eating lunch and if you were out moving and they are sitting they are going to spot you first. You had to have artillery support. You had to have communication all the time. You had to have emergency equipment and if you were spotted or compromised that was it. You had to get pulled out. I loved it. I started adding up the days that I would have to spend in the jungle and the ones that I would be out and my odds were getting better all the time. Plus there was three more weeks of school, training, although it was there it was in a secured area. Heh, I'm thinking all the time boy my odds are getting better and better. Heh I volunteered for that, yes sir I did, that's for me. It seemed like it was the safest way to go. Everything was cam-

ouflaged, quiet, you were taking the most precautions you could possibly take.

Q And a lot of guys were sweating here?

A Yeah. We would go out and hike for four days and come back in. When I started off it wasn't that way. The first couple weeks over there it was heh it was just the way I'd always see it in the movies. The enemy always died and none of us died. The dying and the killing part we were the killing part and they had the dying part and that was just it, plain and simple and it didn't happen any other way. I was only there a short time and they were telling me oh it's been over a year since anybody been killed and this and that. I was there three weeks and the first one of our guys got shot. Two or three weeks later two more got ambushed. I went out and picked these guys up, ready to go out and get these guys out of the jungle and bring their bodies back and I was going to be in charge of a team. They were called teams. I was going to be doing this here and heh my attitude changed from that gunhoe, John Wayne, go get them, shoot them up idea to uh uh you know. I'm just going to do what I am suppose to do. Go out and look for a few things and send back the intelligence and that is it. I'm going to stay away from all of this killing part if I can. I never killed anybody. I've never done that. I always had a sense of compassion for another person's pain or their suffering or their feelings. I found it hard to be able to do that. I didn't want to have to kill anybody. I didn't want to have to do that. I was, because I was in this company, this outfit once you got

off of the helicopter you were in control. You were the commander-in-chief right there. Nobody could call you up on the radio and tell you you do this or you do that. If you thought it was not safe or it would compromise your mission that was it. It was in the SOP, the army had to follow it and I had no trouble until the last three months I was there and they started trying to call up on the radio and get us to do some of these off the wall things. I was getting short. I was getting ready to come home. My time was down. I was what they would call a short timer. I had a great possibility, my odds were great that I was going home just the way I came and I started giving them a hard time. They weren't changing the SOP on me. They weren't going to call me up and tell me to go move and bomb and set this ambush up.

Q They were going to let you be the drawing card for the...

A No. I wasn't going to be a hero or nothing. No, uh uh. I was sharp and I had a good reputation for going out. I used the mercenaries and I used to go with just one other G.I. and two mercenaries that we would hire from over there to work for us. I got real close with them in my year there. They were young boys doing a man's job. They was maybe fifteen-sixteen years old. Heh and I took them and they would run with me and I used them. I giggled, I respected them and I showed them that respect and I took care of them. I made sure the army gave them whatever they did need. If they needed medical attention they got it. If they had a problem I took care of it. I made sure they got when we were in the...you know I would go and draw rations and stuff.

Heh they got their rations. I would split my case of rations. I had to split them up. I would grab two cases, me and the other G.I. would split ours up and then two would split theirs up and they got half of what we got, to divide up between us. They weren't exploited at all. I taught them how to talk on the radio and I let them use some of the top secret weapons and stuff like that. Heh I treated them like they were just one of us, but I used them when we were in the woods and jungle even though I was a patrol leader and in charge of making a lot of the decisions if I ever questioned anything I'd consult them and say heh what about this, what about that, does that look bad you know. Do you want to go in that area? What kind of snake is that? What's this going to happen? I respected their opinion. If they told me how they felt about something...I remember this old guy telling me one time when we were on the top of a hill he says, I said to him well we are suppose to go down there tomorrow and I said what do you think? He said no ~~VC~~ and I said okay we ain't going. Don't worry we ain't going down there. We'll stay right here you know. I didn't care. It was nice and safe and it was high. We could defend it if we needed to. We could get out if we needed to.

Q So you got out?

A So I got out. 1970, April 15th I came home in what they call STS, I don't know what that stands for. It didn't mean anything to me except I was out and I was on my way home. Ended my service requirement. In the interim my

girlfriend which is now my wife.

Q Oh same person.

A Same person. We got married and we already had a family. We had one child, my oldest. So when I come out my situation had been changed from when I went in. I was going to go in, get my service out of the way and I was going to go to school and now I come out the girl I was worried about losing and being away from was now my wife. I now had her. I had done two things good. I had had the women that I wanted and I got the military obligation out of the way, but now I had to support a family. I given myself a new task on top of wanting to go to school. Now she already had a year of college. She was able to get a year of college and she wanted to be a teacher. Now we got a family. So I started off I worked at Farmer Jack's for three months and the pay was very undersirable. It was no motivation and I couldn't on a hundred bucks a week for forty hours I could not buy a house. I could not rent an apartment. My wife was working at Kmart's and our two little incomes together did not provide us a chance to be economically supportive of ourself. So for three months we were between and we'd stay at her family's house a couple days; we'd stay at my family's house a couple days. Three months of this it gets old and it is straining the relationship, you know.

Q What did she want?

A That was her. She was born January 15, 1970.

Q You got out April 15th so she was already three months old.

A Yeah. So now I come home and I worked at Farmer Jack's for

a couple of months during the summer and I find that they get tired and they close up the garden center see I was part time. It was a full time job but for part time thing. They close up the garden center. I had my ninety days seniority so now they had to find a place to keep me and they dumped me in the produce department and the pay is still the same. Forty hours can't make it and I'm not putting out now because I'm depressed. Then I get putting my time in and I'm working, but I'm not knocking myself out for them. So they laid me off. They'd like to have fired me but they laid me off. The guy I had to work for after I left work there the garden center closed up, he was and he demanded a lot for a little bit of pay and it was tough. I got laid off and that started to make things a little more hectic. So I'm looking for a job and I don't know what is going to happen to me.

Q Did you go down to the Ford plant dressed in a shirt and tie this time?

A No. So wait a second all right. So before, all right, when I got laid off and I was home I heard that they were opening a new plant, parts plant, down here on Pennsylvania Road in Brownstown.

Q I've applied there too.

A So I go down there this time and I'm still in my dress clothes, yeah, I did, absolutely. I went down there and I walked in and I got a different attitude this time. I feel out the application. I give this guy the application and here comes the questions, same questions--are you looking for part-time or full-time employment? Full-time. He says do you plan on

going to school? Yes sir I do. He says oh that is part-time. I said no I'm planning on going to school part-time. I'm looking for full-time employment. I said I've already been through the service and I've got the G.I. bill and I intend to use it. Oh I'm sorry I can't hire anybody that's ever going to school. Do you know I walked out of there and said whatever happened to honesty is the best policy? I said look I already had this happen to me once before. I said I intend on going to school, but I am married. I have a child. I have responsibility. I have to have a good job and I plan on going to school part-time. I said what other kind of a person do you want to work for you? He said well wait a minute and let me go talk to my boss. So he goes in the back and talks to whoever he has to talk to, comes back and says I'm sorry I can't touch anybody going to school. I walked out of there and I didn't know if I was ever going to get a job. I could not imagine, I drove all the way to Saline and applied in a plastic plant.

Q I did that too.

A I said my gosh somebody got to need a good person here somewhere you know. I filled out two applications there. I filled out one for salary and one for hourly. I didn't care what it was. I'm sure I could do it. I went through NCO school. I figured I was qualified. I had a little bit of leadership you know. So I knew how to handle people a little bit. I had a decent feeling about myself so I'd go for it. Whatever it was I'd make the best of it. So they weren't hiring there. One of the first times ever they had people

laid off that they haven't had called back. So I come back home and it was another week. Now this is all taking place over a two week time period, less than two week time period. I went into a neighbor that had lived next door to us, rented the house and moved away and was living real close in the area and she said that her husband worked at the truck plant and he was on salary, Barney Barkley, and he gave me a referral card to go in and look for a job. They were hiring. I went down there and I took my social security card and everything and went down there and filled out the application and they had me come back within a couple hours and take the physical and one of the questions was right there, the guy popped up he said are you going to school? I said no I don't have any plans on going to school. He said but how come you can't hire anybody who is? He said because it costs us so much to train them and then they leave right away. I said well I would think you would want people that were interested in education. You would want smart people to work for you. He said well that is a funny thing he said you can't hire anybody that's has any plans on going to school. He said, but after you hired in and after you worked six months or a year he said if you decide to go to school on a part-time basis he said we'll help pay for it. He said

Q Was this Woody?

A No. I don't know the guys name, but he still works out there. He works in trim on line two I think. He goes on salary and then went to maintenance or something on another production area and then he got cut back and he is hourly now on the assembly line. He is a thinkguy with black and a reddish

tint to his hair, but anyway I said well that was good. That was a good piece of information, but I didn't breath a word of it that I was going to go to school. I mean I already knew now this guy was honest and he was sincere across the board you and me and I felt good.

Q What is your hiring date?

A August 20, 1970.

Q 1970?

A Yep.

Q When you hired in what was it like? What did you do? What do you remember from the first day? This was your first plant experience right?

A Right. I walked in and Woody was there, the personal manager I guess and he filled out all the paper work and stuff and he said you are going to make more money than I do he said, but the only difference is he said is you are going to earn it. He said you are going to work for it. And I'm thinking oh gosh it is about time. I need it so desperatély you know. The pressure, I wasn't providing everything that was expected of, I was not a complete member of the establishment. I had all the responsibilities already. I hadn't reached the level that I needed to be at. We had to come in at 3:00 to start the paper work. They started paying us right then at that time and then I moved to afternoons. We were going to work at 5:42 we were starting and I met Bob Shirtlift which was the superintendent and he talked to us. He said that was the department he hired in, this and that, he said we work hard and long he said. We work six days a week he said and Saturday night we work until 11:00 and we knock off at 8 hours

or 9 hours he said and that's our beer and pizza night. He said and that's it.

Q What department is he in?

A Trim. I went down on line two and worked for Seymour.

Q What did you do?

A I started putting pop rivets on the back of the cabs, the two-tones, for the trim that go in across the side and around the back and it was only half of an operation which I didn't realize at the time and heh I was able to do it. I had to hustle, but I was able to do it and keep up and I said boy this was great and they were paying me and we worked until 11:05 and I started at 3:00. The first day I already put fifteen some hours in right? And that was a Friday. Saturday I go in and it was a nine hour day because they had been shutting down for relief. See when they shut down for relief they add that extra half hour on and if they lost any production they throw in another hour. I was loving it. The first week I take home \$180.00 and that was after taxes. I only worked two days. I threw my hands up in the air and said Yahoo! I found it this is it. Turn me loose. I went down and I told them at the employment office that I found a job. I got a back to work check. I got the two week's I was off in between because I had to ~~through~~ two weeks in for a waiting period right or whatever that was that I had been off. I got all this money in one lump and I've only worked two days and I took the paycheck and flipped through the paper I found a place for \$150.00 a month in Southgate, Southgate Park Apartments on Dix south of Eureka there right across

from the Tops. I went down there with my mother, give them their security deposit, paid the first month's rent, called my wife up at her mother's and told her I just rented us an apartment and said we are moving in and she was just totally elated.

Q She was at her mother's?

A She was at her mother's while I was at work. We were already having a tough time, because I can't provide a place and we were straining our...

Q Did she blame you for that?

A No she didn't blame me, it was just hard.

Q Did you blame yourself?

A I didn't blame myself, but I felt very frustrated that I was caught in this position. Especially after I had blown a good job by telling the truth twice in a row..I always been taught. Heh I was the perfect example of the all American boy. It wasn't down on the farm. I was in the suburbans. There was no applæbut there I still had a good family environment. It was broken up a little bit in the earlier years, but it was solid for the rest of it. I didn't see where I had done anything wrong. Anyway I finally made it. I finally learned how to get around the obstacles right? Too bad I had to lie about my personal intentions, but I did what I needed to do to get the job. I went to work everyday. I didn't miss a day.

Q You never missed a day?

A Yeah I did, but not the first year. The very first week on my way to work I had my old car that I turned over to my mother before I went into the service, an old Falcon con-

vertible, and the tires are bald and it rained and as I was going down hill from the viaduct I lost control of the car and it spun circles and it hit the curb and bent the wheel and it blew the tire and I was late for work the next day of the first week on a Monday or so. No it was the next day. It was Judy's birthday the next day and so when I was going in I went right in to the superintendent and I was late and he asked me what had happened. He wasn't hostile. He just sincerely asked me what had happened. I told him I had an accident and my car wasn't quite up to snuff and I'm going to have buy a new car soon but I'll be all right you know. Well it just so happened he had a car for sale. A '69 Mustang, fairly new one year old, 10,000 miles. So the next weekend he asked me over to his house.

Q Was this Surliss?

A Bob Surliss, see his car. So I go over and I see his car and yeah I like it. So my parents loaned me some of the money and with what I get out of my savings and stuff that I had been saving when I was in the service heh I've got a new car and I'm back and forth to work. I took one day off to go to a wedding and that was that. Other than that there was no time missed. We moved into this apartment. I furnished it and saved us enough money. Now we needed everything. Put us on a budget, saved enough money and I started looking for a house because I did not want to be in that apartment more than one year. I signed a one year lease and the overtime was allowing me to save the money, support us and pay our rent. Everything that we needed.

Q What did you make the first year?

A I think I made for the first year I made about \$6,000 or \$7,000 but I started in August. The next year I made \$12,500.

Q What do you make now?

A Last year I made \$54,000, but I'm working overtime available. See I'm very materialistic and I'm a goal setter and I'm a planner. I was back then and I started making these plans well if I want to do this, I would like to do this and if I can't do this I'll settle for this or I'll settle for this you know. When I first went into the army I said well I'd like to fly a helicopter if I can't do that I want to go to jump school because you make more money and I'll settle for that you know. So I started working at Ford's and I started off on the afternoons there and making decent money, working the overtime and I get set up and within the first year I applied for my VA loan and I find this subdivision over here a little closer to work. I can almost afford, my income will let me afford this house and I figure after I get us in here...