

JAMES VERNATTER

Q Why don't you tell me Jim exactly what you do as a union official in the plant?

A Well my job is to the police the shop itself. To enforce any osha masha laws rules and regulations

Q What is Osha Masha?

A That is the Occupational Health and Safety Administration which is a government. My Osha course is an arm of that branch of government. It is run by the state. I enforce those and I also try to help Lance Perikam (?) through working with the management sometimes through the union on grievances. And that's really about the extent of what my job consists of.

Q You're the health and safety representative for the UAW Local 900?

A Right.

Q When did you get the job, and how did that come about? What are some of the problems you have tackled?

A Well I first went on the job 1975. And like most of other positions in the union, it's politics. It's supposed to be a non-political position, but it's almost impossible. See I get involved sometimes in union politics. In the first year I was on the job, I maintained my records, my weekly records. I had three thousand and some safety complaints that I submitted to the company.

Q Three thousand and some submitted to the company?

A Right, in one year. I filed I believe Rick it was six hundred and some grievances. Now over the years due to a lot of hard work, and with assistance from other people, the year of 86, (in fact I'm just now putting that report for the year-end report), I had one grievance and a

hundred and seventy four safety complaints items.. So that shows you from 1975 to the year of 86 the improvements we made through the assistance from the International Union and the state.

Q That's amazing!

A It sure is.

Q What are some of the changes, some of the grievances you had when you first got on?

A Well, you been a painter I think at one time, the same booth has been a constant battle at the Michigan Truck Plant. Now this was an ongoing thing to try to keep those booths maintained and a good atmosphere. So due to the threaten of the strikes and constantly badgered them with with grievances and bringing the International in and the state and so on. We've seen a big improvement in our paint booths, I think. And I think the employees who works in those booths see it too. And I am proud of that because to me the painters in any plant, are exposed to more dangers than any body else due to the chemicals and what they're working with. That's one reason I like to put a lot of emphasis and work into the paint department.

Q What kind of changes went in the paint booth? How did it change?

A Well when we first started with it, maintaining the booth was something that was very seldom done.

Q What did that mean?

A What that means to clean the booths, keep it in good balance so the paint will fall. It won't have the overspray. And those things wasn't done until pressure really come down on them. What the company failed

to realize was, it not only endangers the employees, but it also made a quality of product not to good. 'Cause anytime the paint doesn't fall the way it's suppose to in that booth, the overspray gets onto the unit, then the paint finish is not as good. So through the years of working on that, and they realized when they got going, they improved the quality of the produce. Plus, it made conditions for the painters alot better. We've seen alot of changes, but they still got a lot of changes that needs to be done.

Q What kind of changes other than in the paint area?

A Another one I'm proud of... When I say proud you have to know what I've gone throught to accomplish these things. It's there welding booths in the body shop. Now for years those guys breathe the exhaust fumes coming from the welding. And galvanized steel is a much more toxic metal than what the other would be. So this year, no last year, we were successful in getting a forty some thousand dollar welding device put in there with an exhaust suction on the bottom of it. So when the fumes come off it draws it back through the gun head into an exhaust system and puts it out. But it took years of fighting and all they want to do is give us a man cooling fan. But now were proud of that one.

Q How long did they have the technology do that and refuse to do it?

A I would say other locations had known about it for quite some time.

Q Three years, five years?

A I'd say at least five years. But see how we learn about these things is through our meetings. We have annual training twice a year. And we

meet and people gives you brochures and things that they represent different companies. And you pick up a lot of things and go to reading on it and you can see some of the things you need. That's how we learn about a lot of it.

Q Who comes to these meetings?

A All the health and safety representatives from Fords.

Q Union and company?

A Union and the company. And then, we have outside vendors what we call vendors. They deal in safety features and this is how all this stuff comes about.

Q What are the areas that you think need a lot of improvement over the next... 'Cause in terms of welding, more of that has gone to robots. Paint booths; we're one of the few plants that still has human beings painting.

A They are gonna more or less go automated.

Q They are gonna go automatic in the number of years ahead. What was the one grievance that you had this year?

A Rick I have to go back and look at my reports. What I see is the biggest danger facing our people, and I'm speaking about our plant, is skilled trades. Our work group out there they are age and seniority. These guys get more or less in a habit of doing things their way. And this year alone, Fords has had six fatalities out of the big three that's Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors, there were twenty one.

Q Fatalities in skilled trades...

A Fatalities. In the last ten years there was fifty And most of this was contributed do to the fact of not locking out power equipment.

Q What does locking out power equipment mean?

A That means to kill all power on 'em. It could be neumatic, it could be air, or electric. There's different stages they go through to make sure everything is done properly. But for some reason, even out of all the bulletins and the safety meetings we have and the safety talks, they fail to do that.

Q Who is they? The company or the foreman?

A No, no I'm talking about the skilled trades themselves.

Q That is your union brothers. Why do they do that?

A My personal opinion is from what I've observed, they take that risk to gain extra time to read a paper, take a nap, or whatever it may be. If they can pick up five minutes that's five minutes they've got for themselves. It only takes one mistake.

Q What kind of education programs have you run, and how do you deal with that kind of thing? With workers getting in the way of their own safety, it's not the company.

A Well what we have to do Rick, and what I'm doing on this bulletin coming out, it's hard for someone to not realize what the contents of this thing is for what I'm about to say. But, once we've talked to people, and training has been provided, and they just arbitrarily neglect to take the precautions they're taught to do, and my position is this: If it takes discipline, and I'm not against that. I whole lot rather have a person angry at me, than have to go to his family and tell them about the fatality we've had in the plant. I hope it don't come to that. But you know yourself how some people are.

Q Who is going to discipline them, you have to do the discipline?

A It will be Ford Motor Company.

Q But Ford Motor Company, they would like it to get done fast too? You know what I'm saying?

A We're putting pressure on 'em. When I say we I'm talking about the International Union along with the safety reps. Putting pressure on divisions to come through the ranks to the location we're in and force management at those levels to enforce safety precautions.

Q That is a hell of a thing to have to do. When you think where things have come from right? The union now has to get the company to keep people safe, where it used to be the opposite.

A That's right.

Q What do you think is happening, why is that happening?

A Well one thing that has made it possible is the Osha Law. But now I have to say with all honesty, I do know on the Reagan Administration, that this law has been weakened. In fact, we have forty percent less compliance officers that we had at one time before he took office, than what we have now. Without the officers out there to police it, you know their inspections are limited, and that's one thing. But what cause so many fatalities I know the International Union and all union reps. are concerned and we should be. We've got to do something to put a stop to this. Now the company has set aside five and a half million dollars. These monies are for training, there's approximately thirty-three thousand tradesmen. They're gonna go back through again, they're gonna teach 'em the proper procedure of lockout, and how to do things safely. Now that's how concerned they are about it. Every

skilled trades person will receive that training.

Q What is the obstacle you have from the company?

A From what I pickup in our joint meetings with the division staff, and I'm talking about the corporate safety director, I believe those people are dedicated. I believe they really want it. But when you get back to the local level, the majority of management on your local level, they put production first. Now if you can interject safety after that's fine, don't interfere with production. That's their attitude.

Q So it's a problem with the immediate supervisors and the immediate production general foreman?

A That's where the problem's at.

Q That seems what folks say about the E.R. Program too, that the top has much more principles of committment to the safety questions.

A Uhm...

Q Let's take it a step back. You're the person who says you may not like what I've got to say, but I'm gonna say it. I don't think that's your exact words... How did you get started in your new politics?

A Well, my father was active in union, in the United Mine Workers. I seen the struggles that they went through, and coming from a poor family, I'm talking about material things, but a lot of love, it saddened me to see how people were treated. So I try to pick up the fight for the working class people. So that's how come I get involved.

Q Where were you raised?

A The Eastern part of Kentucky in the coal fields.

Q What county?

A Pike County.

Q Pike?

A Yea.

Q A lot of guys from Pike in the plant. Your dad worked as a coal miner?

A Thirty six years.

Q Is he alive or passed away?

A He died with black lung.

Q What do you remember when you were five years old, what is your first memory of your dad in the coal mine?

A Well, I remember him coming home. They had no bath houses, and you had to take your showers or baths at home, the company didn't provide those. You'd see him come in and you'd see the grease and the grime all over 'em. And you'd know what type of work he was doing, and it made you appreciate more.

Q What do you mean?

A Well, you'd really have to see the inside of a mine Rick. And even today now it's been automated to a certain extent. But the job is still very hazardous. It's very hard manual labor. And when you come home and all you can do is barely get in, you know a man's exhausted. And the sad part was, our people in that part of Kentucky, their education was limited. Well the mines was operated, of course, by corporations, they had what they called a company store, we did all of shopping at that store. And what I mean by uneducated, they couldn't properly balance their books or figure out their bills. And some of those mines would go for years literally, and never draw a nickles worth of money, because the store was taking everything they made.

Q It was like sharecropping?

A Absolutely. My dad worked for years and never drew a payday. All he got was what he got from that store.

Q What would he get from the store?

A Well, he would get his necessities, like his food and they even sold 'em coal for their heating through the store. Come school time they'd allow you so much money for school necessities, you know clothing and stuff. And if you spent too much, you had to take sick and couldn't work. If they was allowing you say eight dollars a day, they'd cut you back to two-fifty a day. Because they didn't know when you was comin' back to work, you had no insurance. So you had to try to live on two-fifty a day. And most families had large kids, large families, and you can't feed five or six children on two dollars and fifty cents a day, even then you couldn't.

Q What year were you born Jim?

A 1941.

Q The United Mine Workers came right around there in 1936 or 38?

A Somewhere close around 38 or 39.

Q Was your dad active in the mine work?

A My dad told me, Rick, when he took the oath of office for the union, they were so strict he had to do it in an outhouse, which is a toilet. Some people wouldn't know what an outhouse is. But they gave him the oath of office in a toilet, and they had guards watching. Now another thing that impressed me, and alot of people don't realize, that they was a woman, in West Virginia, she led those men. She encouraged 'em

to organize.

Q Really?

A Absolutely.

Q Do you remember her name?

A No I don't. But I heard dad speak of her on many occasions and that really enthused me to know that a woman would take part. But she actually led 'em and she helped 'em.

Q So they demonstrated a real respect, there wasn't this women should stay at home and not get involved in politics?

A No.

Q What office did your dad hold?

A Only thing dad ever was in the union, was just a union member.

Q So when you mean sworn in, you mean the actual...

A Take an oath of office you know, like they swear us in the U.A.W., and that's all he ever did.

Q What were the benefits of being in the union in those days as the time went on from the forties, and the fifties?

A As you know, John L. Lewis was our president. He originally started with the U.A.W., A.F.L.C.I.O.. And he took the United Mine Workers. And I doubt seriously if you can find anybody that ever worked in a union mine, that would have a bad thing to say about John L. Lewis. He improved the working conditions for the people. The pay rate was better. They eventually got hospitalization. And things just got better for them in general. And that's one thing I look up to John Lewis for, he realized the struggle that those people were having. He fought for them, he shared their beliefs, and shared their sorrows.

Q What do you think drove people to stick together, not they all like the union in the beginning right, they had to fight to get that union with each other as well as...

A Rick, I believe what made people stick together was a common goal. If you look today, and we've got it in our own local, our own union; people get their hands on something, and I'm talking about material things, like money; they seem to forget where they come from and leave those behind. In other words, I've got mine and you get yours. Well, see that's society today all over the world, that's one thing that's hurtin' us, it really is. And I don't know how a person can be a union person, much less a union official, not be concerned about the welfare of your mankind.

Q So this is in your blood you were raised this way.

A Absolutely.

Q What about your brothers and sisters? I assume you have some.

A I've got one that's a salary personnel for Volkswagon.

Q Where, down in Pennsylvania?

A He's in Texas. Now out of all the kids; there were eight boys, and four girls in our family, he is turned in my opinion from the way I read 'em, anti-union. Where I get that from, the companies taken him. And there again, the monies that he has received. And I guess you can just call it being brainwashed in my opinion. He's more company orientated now than he ever was as far as union.

Q Are you still able to get along as kinfolk?

A Well, we still talk. We try to avoid, you know, union matters.

Q What about your other brothers and sisters? Are they living down in Kentucky still, are they here?

A I've got two brothers living and two sisters. And they are both in Kentucky, and my two sisters are in Michigan. All the rest of 'em has died and gone on.

Q Let's keep talking about when you were coming up. You stayed back in Kentucky for...

A I grew up in Kentucky.

Q What was it like growing up?

A Well...

Q What was the day like when you were twelve years old?

A You had no bicycles or anything of that nature. If you did anything at all was push a rubber tire around. And we had a swimming hole, but the girls wasn't allowed 'cause no one had a bathing suit. You either went in your pants, or you went skinny dippin', you know, we had skinny dippin' back then. But it was a good life, and the reason it was I believe, because there was less T.V., there was more socializing with your neighbors. And I enjoyed, even though it was rough, but like I said earlier, we had a lot love in our family, we never went hungry, we wore a lot of patches on our clothes. But it seems like when you have that in a home, the other things are just secondary.

Q How old were you when you started coming up? Did you finish school down there?

A Yes. My wife and I went through elementary school and high school together.

Q Oh really?

A Yea.

Q Tell me more about that?

A But she and I went all the way through school together. I was one year ahead of her. She never dated anyone else, neither did I. So we had a boy back home, I guess struck, and she and I was never really hitting it off. Just trying to get on you know. So I went to him just out he blue and told 'em, I said you leave her alone. So we got out of high school and I come to Michigan and got a job in Kalamazoo, Michigan. I got a job putting a gas line in for... I forget what gas company it was. So I worked a few months and went back home and got married. I went back to visit really. So my mother said you need somebody with you, you know, here in Michigan to take care of you. So we went to Wise, Virginia to get married in one day in Wise, Virginia.

Q Just across the border?

A Yea. I said I'll come back and get a place and I'll come back and get you. I come back Rick and the next week I got laid off.

Q This is about 1958 during the recession?

A Yea, right. So I was laid off from the construction job, so I went back to Kentucky. I lived with my mother and dad and I drew unemployment 'till I got my last check, which there was no work available there. I said well I'm going back to Michigan. So I had a '51 Mercury, we put what we had in it, which wasn't very much, and we headed out. We've been here ever since. I went back one year, I quit in 1963 or '62. I went back and worked one year down there, driving a

soft drink truck. It was pretty good in the summer, but you couldn't make anything in the winter because it paid strictly commission, no salary. So I come in one evening, I told her, I said pack your stuff, we're coming back. And that's how come we come back to Michigan.

Q What did her family do?

A Her dad was a miner. And her mother was just a housewife. That's all she ever did, no outside work. And there were two girls and three boys in her family.

Q Did your mom work outside the home at all?

A No. She didn't have time with that many children.

Q You drove up 75, was 75 built coming up in '51?

A No. 75 wasn't in. We brough 23 all the way. And at that time, Telegraph was a three-lane highway. And I believe they call Telegraph Bloody Telegraph at that time. So if you past it was in the center lane, if you happen to pull out in the wrong time, somebody did at the other time, there was a head-on collision, that's the reason they called it Bloody Telegraph.

Q When you came up in '51, where did you live?

A Over in Detroit.

Q Which part?

A On Lincoln in... Right off of Trumbull. Lincoln and Mercury.

Q A lot of southern whites moved up to that area.

A Right, right.

Q Let's get an official statement here. Should be called folks coming up from Kentucky hillbillies, southern whites, or it doesn't matter what's

said about them. How do you feel when folks refer to your heritage?

A Well, I take pride in it. Knowing what's there. And I do know what the northern people, and you can find this in all races of people, they kindly frown on what I've read on southern people coming to the north. And you could say the same thing as far as black people or Arabs or whatever it may be. And I still believe there is a lot of resentment from the people who was born and reared here in Michigan towards southern people. I believe that. But see, we didn't come here at our choosing, we come here because we had to.

Q When you say you had to, did you get a good job when you came up here and lived over in the Cass Area?

A Well, I worked in the service station. I recall it very well. Six days a week, I took on fifty-four hours a week.

Q This was in 1951?

A Right '56, '57.

Q Oh it's getting later, I'm sorry, it was a '51 car and 1957.

A Yea. So at fifty-four hours a week I was getting by that was about it. Well, my rent was thirteen fifty a week for an apartment. The wife and I it was only two, so we made it okay.

Q What did you do on Sunday, your day off?

A I actually had to work on Sunday.

Q You had to work?

A I had a day off during the week.

Q What did you do on your day off? Did you go to Belle Isle? What did folks do?

A We went to Belle Isle's quite a bit. More so when Debbie was born. We tried to spend a lot of time with her over there, and we also took the zoo in when we could. But that was about the outside activities all we had. 'Cause you know it didn't cost anything to do it, and we couldn't afford anything else, so that's what we done.

Q Why don't you share with me your work experience moving up until you hired in at the plant? Or into the auto industry?

A Well, I started out in a service station, then I went to construction. And that's one field I really enjoyed.

Q What did you like about it?

A Well I like the outside work. And to me you work with a class of people. What I mean by class of people, they wasn't snobbish, and they was just common labor peoples, more or less people of your category. They were very helpful. They would take me and I'm talking about people that had thirty years with the company, I had worked for Mancini Construction when I started. They would show me things and advise me. I really appreciated it, and I'm talking about black people now and whites. They wasn't just one certain group of people. They more or less took me under their arm, they taught me how to get through the ropes. And that's set with me, because for people to be concerned about you and want to help you. It was a good experience. And then, I got laid off...

Q Black and white, immigrants, everybody?

A Right. I got laid off in construction our job worked out, and what they do on construction, if they don't have a job waiting behind, then

they got to bid on...

Q Can I get a cigarette from you?

A Yea, I didn't know you smoked.

Q I don't, but this is nice and relaxing, once in a while. So you did the construction.

A I worked on construction. The job finished so they was hiring at Ford the Truck Plant and that was in '64. So I got a call one night and they wanted to know if I wanted a job. My wife's uncle was salaried down in Louisville, and was up here on engineering assignment. So I went to Plymouth for an application. He took it in. So they called me, the same night the company, I'm talking about Ford's, my superintendent on the construction called and we had a job on Thirteen Mile and Mound, I believe. So I said I'm gonna try Fords for a while. So that was in 1964, February. And I went in, I said I'll stay until the overtime runs out. That was my plan. So I started on the line as an assembler, and then in six months times they put the afternoon shift on. I went on inspection which was alot easier than assembly work. So I kept waiting for the overtime to leave so I could go back to construction.

Q Why were you waiting for the overtime to quit?

A Well, it was an opportunity to make some extra money, and maybe manage to have a little bit, maybe get a home or whatever, 'cause we wasn't working overtime in construction. It was strickly eight hours a day. It was a new experience and I wanted to try it. But my intentions were always to go back to construction 'cause that's were I wanted. After I

went on inspection, time just keep slipping and slipping; we were working twelve hours a day, there was no limit on overtime at that time. Next thing I knew I had three years, five years, and then seven years, and then our kid was born, so that put a damper on the whole thing. I had to look at the benefit package and what I had in additional responsibilities. So that's how I stuck at Ford Motor Company. I had no intentions on staying, but I'll have to say this, I've made a good living since I been there and I've met alot of good friends. The works been hard at times, but it's been worth it.

Q What was it like that first day you hired in on the line?

A Well Rick when I first hired in they wasn't running production. They were running just gradually.

Q But that was a new plant?

A Yes, and it really wasn't bad. But they give me one of the worst jobs I believe they ever had. And that was putting the fire wall pads in. So you know you've seen the job probably performed. I six foot two, and I've got to bend over under the I.V. panel to get up under it.

Q That's the instrument panel?

A Right. So that's the job they put me on. I don't know why, I really think Jane's uncle had something to do with it. He either wanted to see if I was willing to work and stay, or if I wasn't. But I hung with it.

Q How did you squeeze in under there?

A It wasn't easy. You had to lay in a certain position and everything else.

Q I'm amazed. Part of me writing a book is I'm amazed that human beings can do what they do in the plant day in and day out. I can't do it. I do the best I can, if folks want to question that, but I am amazed at what human beings can do. From sanding the way they sand so hard. You know to get in all these positions. At six foot two you had to get in underneath and put that pad up under the board.

A Right. Well now when I was working on construction, we were pouring sewer systems on Eight Mile and Dequindre. Now the finish of that tunnel was five foot four inches, and I'm working down in the tunnel all night bent over. But now there again, when I worked on that job, after about three or four months, they put me on top, helping on the top operation. And that's one reason I wanted to go back to construction because I like the outside work. I like the people.

Q Being in the tunnel was like being in the mines?

A Right, right.

Q As an inspector you worked in different departments.

A I started in trim and then I went to chasis. I the end of the garage area back to paint. Then back to the garage.

Q When you hired in how did the foreman treat you?

A Rick when I hired in there, it was a question of how the foreman treated us. I'll have to say we had a very radical group of people. They were all young people. And if you didn't like something, you told the foreman. And the reason that was, at that given time it was hard to even get people to work. The work force wasn't there for them. And I remember even before I become a union member, they tried to give me additional work on my job. And I just flat out told them hey, I'm not

doing it.

Q You just refused?

A Just refused.

Q Before you had your ninety days?

A Before I had ninety days. And that was that was ever said about it. Now, they might be fifteen-twenty people quit a night, and they might fire that many. It was constant thing. Bringing new hires in. They didn't want to get you upset where you'd walk off on 'em, 'cause there was nobody to take your job you see. And that's how we got away with it. But I'll say this, our union then, in my opinion, was more vocal than what they are today.

Q What did the union do to be more vocal if you can remember?

A Well, they come around, to give you an example...

Q You can use names, I'm not gonna use names, but it helps to tell the story I think.

A They come around one year, in that factory year was '64 and one in '65 model. They told us they shutting down for changeover. Well, being from the south and my parents still living, I wanted to go back home to visit as often as I could. So on a spur of the moment they come back right before the shutdown and cancelled it. So I told them I made plans, I'm going south. Well you can't. Tony Carrillo (?) was our plant chairman. So I had Tony to come down and I told him, I said look I've plans to go see my mother and dad. Now they've cancelled the shutdown, I said I'm going, and I expect to be taken care of. So Tony got with some of them, he got it set up for me. But I believe the reason that was Rick, I was always very outspoken in union meetings and

whatever.

Q Did you have union meetings then?

A Oh yes. And I don't think Tony run into any problems. So he got it set up to where I could go and come back when I got ready. But our people then, I have seen them you know just flat out refuse to do a lot of assignments, and get away with it.

Q How did you get involve as a union official as the years went on?

A Well I attended quite a few of the meetings. And again, I wouldn't care who it was, and I'm that today, sometimes it gets me in trouble, but that's just the way I am. If I disagree with what they was saying, I get up to speak against them. In 1967, we had a contract radification meeting. The union was over on Van Born Road then at 157. So being the Wayne Assembly Plant and the Truck Plant is the same local, I felt our people should get the same thing that they had. They had additional prep time for their welders and spray painters, and they also had a nickle more on the hour than what we got.

Q They also had what?

A A nickle more. They brought from the old Lincoln Mercury Plant over on Livernois and Warren. So I asked them about it, they didn't get it for us. And I asked for our membership to reject it. I said why should we be treated as second class citizens? We're in the same local, we're entitled to the same representation. So the members supported me in it. But unfortunately our international service rep., he got up and told us, that's all your gonna get, you can voted it up or you can vote it down, but when you come back, you coming back to the same thing. Now that's the way they talked to us. So naturally the guys accepted

it.

Q So it was always difficult as early as sixty-five...

A Sixty-seven.

Q Their was conflict between the local being a little militant and radical, and the international forgetting it.

A And another time we had a wildcat. And one of the goodest union mans I guess I've ever met. He's from local 600. The man's dead now, I can't recall his name. I regret it after I said it, but they were trying to get us back to work, and I got and told the man to him, his contact, and the whole bunch to stuff it. I shouldn't of said that, because he was only doing his job, I realize now what the guy was doing. But being outspoken like I was, then people encouraged me to get more involved, and that's how I come about it.

Q What did you wildcat over in sixty-seven or sixty-eight?

A Most of our wildcats at that time was because of the paint department. There was one every week. The guys would walk out. And depending what day of the week it was, we would make it a little longer. And if it happened to be on payday night we got our checks, if that happened to be when it was, we'd go on home. If it wasn't, we was lible to mill around the shop or whatever. But there was a wildcat every week.

Q So over health and safety, over overspray questions?

A Absolutely.

Q Heat in the booth?

A Yea.

Q So when did you first run for union office? I got there in seventy-one.

A It was shortly after the sixty-seven contract radification. I'm just guessing, Rick, the best I recall was around sixty-nine. I run for election committee. I served on that. And then in 1971 or somewhere around there, I run for the plant committee, so I served on that. It was a very difficult job at that time. And through politics, and just being involved with this type of thing, I was led by some other people, and I'm not blaming them 'cause you make your own decisions as you go through life, but sometimes you can be influenced. I got with a group of people that was anti-this and anti-that.

Q What is this and that?

A Well they was labeled, after it was all with, as racists. And there probably was some racism to a certain extent. So being associated with them I was put in the same category. You cannot serve a membership, if you can't serve a membership a hundred percent. You can't select a group of people and say this is the ones I want to represent. But unfortunately, I was tagged with that, which wasn't true. It took me a long time to overcome that. So once I did, I went back in and started over again.

Q Let's take a few minutes on it because I know that is a sensitive topic, but it's something that happened in all the plants. As the sixties turned into the seventies, and blacks got more active and had more opportunity, other folks held onto certain positions... Racism is not new in the country, and wasn't new in the U.A.W., but our plant experienced it right around sixty-nine to seventy-four or seventy-five period in the union. I know because I got out of the Newsletter, I

don't know if you remember, but we had put out a Newsletter, I think in seventy-three or seventy-four, when Jimmy Coleman was running against John Popovich and everybody agreed to put out this newsletter to say we wouldn't support Jimmy Coleman because he was incapable of what he was doing; and wouldn't support John Popovich because at that point I thought being a member of the Moose Club represented something. When it came to put out the Newsletter, I was the only one that distributed it because everybody else said they didn't want to get involved. So that was an active issue. How did that get expressed? The racial tensions around the union politics?

A Well how mine comeabout, Jimmy Coleman was president. Jimmy Fugate was our plant chairman. Well there was always a friction between Fugate and Coleman. They was very seldom on speaking terms what you could say, friendly terms. So we felt, I did especially, that our membership was being neglected because of that. As an individual, I liked Jimmy Coleman, I thought he was a good man. In fact, he's the man who give me my job that I have now. But I disagree with him on some other principles. So what we did, we resigned our positions as union officers to try to put more load on him about settlements prior to an election. We felt if we got a new administration, the thing would fall apart. We was going go back and him on and beat 'em and take the president's job. But it didn't work, that's how the racism part come up and got in the middle of it, 'cause we left him high and dry with nobody to help 'em. And we were wrong in what we did, now, the membership suffered, it wasn't the politics, it was the membership.

Q We had those walkouts in the paint department during that period.

A Right. Now that's how it all comeabout. And I was in the middle of it and that's how I got the label. It took me a long time to leave it, to overcome it.

Q How do you think you overcame it? Because I know eventually Charlie got elected, and you were very supportive to when he became plant chairman in his new position, because you had been more experienced at that point. What was some other ways that you overcame that reputation that view?

A Well, when everything didn't go the way we expected it to go, Jimmy in returned, new politics again, and make 'em both work in the Wayne Plant. We had two different groups of people besides Jimmy's group. I'm talking about caucuses. So he wanted to merge in rank in file, and at that time, I'm trying to think was their name was.

Q Progressive?

A I believe it was... So they wanted to merge with us. Naturally you know you're more powerful in numbers. So we met. Stuart Martin which is a good friend of mine that worked for years with me. We went to the meeting so we brought some names we wanted to bring with us, which was Bomar, and some of the others. We had a guy there he was against it. He said he wasn't bringin' in, he didn't want no blacks. At that point in time, I got up and I told 'em, I cannot be part of an organization like this, I don't want no part of it, and Stu and I left. Well word got around of what we'd done, we done it with good intentions, it wasn't politics, this incident, it was our feelings, 'cause we like

Bomar. Bomar helped us, but they wouldn't accept 'em. So when that happened, we walked out and word got around. And Coleman in turn come back and a vacancy in Health and Safety was available, and he give it to me. So naturally having a past handles had giving me, I was more determined to go in there and work and represent the people and prove myself. That's the only way I could see gettin' back, and that's exactly what I've tried to do from that day on.

Q How do you see the racial tensions now? When you talk about racial tensions, you talk pretty much within union politics, we're not talking yet inside the line and stuff, which we will get to.

A Rick, it's there and it's there because a lot people interject things that's really not a reality. I don't know if they want it be that way, or if it's just because they don't really understand the principle of things.

Q What kind of things do they interject?

A Well, now to give you an example. Our plant chairman now is Archie Kinney which is Caucasion, of course Charlie was black.

Q That's from the hills?

A Right. Now when Charlie was there, Charlie did things he had to do to serve the membership. And I believe Charlie was a good plant chairman and good union man. So there was a friction when Charlie left between Larry, which is plant committee man and Archie; on who would get the job. Well Archie wanted out, he got the job. So since then Archie had to makes some differences, changes in assignments to cover different areas because of the problem we're having. It's nothing new, it's

nothing nobody else has ever done, but Charlie did it, they all done it. They had to do it at times. Now because these changes were made, and because Archie was successful in beating Larry out of the job, there's still friction. And some people are interjecting racism into that. It's unfortunate, but they still do it, and I've come to one conclusion, if my record and my actions don't speak for myself, then I cannot convince nobody any different, it that's the way they want to feel.

Q Do you think that it's lessened, you don't think that someone like Archie represents what someone like Jim represented in terms of the racial kind of stuff.

A No.

Q That didn't change from these last fifteen years?

A Absolutely.

Q How do you think the union has changed?

A The union in my opinion, Rick, from what I...

Q You said there used to be meetings? I know I've stopped going to the meetings these last four or five years, but even when I went the first ten, half the time there was never anybody there.

A From what I new in the past, and what I see now, and I'm speaking my personal feelings. Our leadership, when I'm talking about leadership I'm talking about international, they're relying too much on legislation to do the job that we could do for ourselves. Now to give you an example of what I'm talking about, they want to elect certain people to office, and I'm talking about state offices, which there's

nothing wrong with that, you've got to have political people there to help you when you need help. But too many of these same people that are monies, and I'm talking about union monies, have gone to help, has turned their back on us when actually we need their help. But yet, I'm not talking in supporting anyone party; Democrat, Republican, Independent, whatever it may be. The same people that's turned their backs on us because the wrong person runs against 'em come election time. Up until recently, they still go back and support that individual.

Q Can you give an example you're thinking of?

A Well for state offices, we had one guy over there in just this past election, in fact, I can't recall the name that I read in the paper, they wouldn't support 'em... Not enough pressure on our local politicians and our federal politicians to get laws where they would benefit the people. Now I'll give you an example; they know how the national labor relation board is set up, it's been that way, I guess from the time it was instituted; but we've done nothing to change it. Now we've got Reagan's appointees on it, they're anti-union as far as I'm concerned when it comes to labor matters. They've proven that, their records shows it. But we've never done anything in the past to change to that board, to get it to work to elect a position, where it would better serve the people.

Q You're saying like the labor board should be elected.

A Absolutely, absolutely. Let 'em answer to the people that they're actually making rules for. If you don't have to answer to nobody, you do want you want to do.

Q Whoever appoints you?

A Right.

Q Well you started saying that the union is spending too much of it's time supporting people in office that don't do what they're supposed to do. What's the strategy for the union; it has an electoral strategy, and then it has the shop floor strategy right? Clearly the internation spends much more time on the legislative strategy. Do you think that's good or bad, or what do you think would be a shop floor strategy? Because folks also don't seem real involved, they don't seem real interested. Your high seniority of workers try to see what we can get towards the last fifteen years in the plant.

A Rick, I think we're we, and when I'm saying we, I'm talking about the union, and a higher leadership in particular, and then we can blame ourself on a lower level, as not educating our people. They don't realize what they got, where it actually come from. They can't comprehend that people sacrificed; lost their homes, their jobs, and some of them even lost their lives; they think everything they've got, that it was a gift to 'em from Ford Motor Company. Until you instill into people's minds, regardless of what you may have today, but it's like your health, it can be gone tomorrow. And I can see the erosion coming now, through the E.I. process.

Q What do you mean?

A Well you can't jump in bed with management that you fought for forty some odd years and struggled to get anything you gained. 'Cause in my personal opinon, what E.I. designed for, is to weaken and to get

younger people more management orientated, leaning their way. Now once the company succeeds in what they're doing, and gets concessions they're getting, and they're gonna get 'em, they're already getting it, when they get back to where they want to be, organized labor will never be as strong in this country again as it has been in the past. 'Cause they'll never give them another foothold. They won't yield to 'em. They learned one thing through organized labor and through strikes, and a good example is down here at Guardian Glass, they figure if you keep 'em out long enough, they'll come back. If they get hungry enough, they'll come back. Well, unfortunately they're right on a majority of the people. Some of 'em will stay out there and do their best, but that's how they broke that union down there. And that's what they'll do to these other generations. All these generations coming up, that's what's gonna happen to them.

Q What kind of concessions that the U.A.W. is giving locally or national?

A Well, I don't believe concessions are necessary to be truthful with you. And I go on back to our elected politicians, the U.A.W. supported and labored for years to get a content at legislation. Now whether it's good, bad, or indifferent, I don't know. But from what I've read, they can be both ways. But we've had people in Congress, and because they're from a state that produces corn, wheat, or whatever, they won't support content at legislation. And doing so, it would themselves and their products, so we've got the Democrats fighting each other, and the Republicans sitting on the side and taking no position one way or the other. That's what I meant about politics. But now by giving

concessions, and enticing the Japanese to come here, they feel that will take the heat off to a certain extent, on content legislation, they'll pay some kind of content of legislation in my opinion, this session of congress. But it will be a watered down thing. Because of those that have located here. I think we've got four know, and they're estimating by 1992, there'll be six more Japanese firms in this country. What people fail to realize, you've got ten Japanese manufacturers in this country, but how much of that labor and those parts are gonna be manufactured here. Plus the fact, Pole Town is a good example, one of the most automated manufacturing plants in the world, they're running sixty percent capacity now. They're gonna lay a shift off here on February the third. If all your parts and things come from overseas and all you do is assembly here, your work force keeps dwindling. So what good is it then? We're gonna lose thousands and thousands of jobs, I'm afraid, and we'll never get 'em back.

Q In sixty-five they couldn't get enough people to work and there was some clout to stand up for dignity, twenty years later there is way to many folks for the few jobs. They sell overseas, they got the new technology coming in, they got the corporations coming, Japanese Corporations coming. What would you do it your werr Owen Beaver?

A Well...

Q Let's try to make it a simple...

A I believe, Rick, again, we've got to educate the people. And, what I mean by that is, I'm just expressing my personal opinion, but I'm gonna show you how I believe and how I see things. Now you know we've got

racial problems in the country, but I believe that the white politicians, they giving up to the whites to make 'em content, and the blacks are struggling. Where the white kindly looks down, well I'm okay I'm not worrying about him. See what he fails to realize, you can be in the same category. Until we get the working class to realize the struggles, and a lot of people fail to realize you've got to make things and do things to have something for your children and their children, we're not doing that. If we could educate the people, and get them to participate at the polls, and I'm talking about elections and things, you'd see some changes. But until we do those things, I don't see no change for this country here.

Q What kind of local education program would you establish if you had a free hand?

A I'd like to go in, and I've always said and still supported it, it should be mandatory that a person attend training sessions and membership meetings, and to go back to the days of the hard struggles. I'm talking about when they was fighting on the overpass. When united mine workers was trying to organize and some... They've got this on film now. And let the people sit down and see. And if you can't see people out there with blood streaming down their face, people lying on the ground that's been shot, and have some compassion for them and what they've done for you; because they did it for you, to me there's something wrong with your heart. There's just something wrong. But we've gathered too much worldly goods, we've got our boats, we've got our cars, our motorcycles, and most of us a little money, and we're satisfied, we're content. Until it hits us within our own homes.

Q That's what is happening, everybody is taking care of themselves?

A Absolutely.

Q When you got the farmer saying don't change this because... There's no real common view, common goal.

A That's right.

Q Why do you think the international union gave into the E.I. program or the other programs? When I look at the union that the union gave into the E.I. program clearly there's no education that goes on. Why do you think it happened? What caused this... To correct a problem you have to find out what happened, and then you gotta ask what can we do about it.

A Well Rick as you know, Don Ethan, he's the was that negotiated this with General Motors and of course it become part of the national agreement. I believe Ethan's logic as far as he was concerned was what he thought was best. Well what Ethan did, he did a lot of studies in Japan and he felt because the imports coming in like they were, that we had to change our methods of management and labor relations. And he seen this as a way of getting together. I believe his intent was good as far as he was concerned. But the end result, I don't believe is gonna be any good. And that's how E.I. come about, because Ethan was so strong for it. And General Motors seen it and they jumped on it. Now Ford Motor Company not gonna spend the kind of the money their spending on E.I. unless they's something in the basket when they get to the bottom. That they're gonna get back what they put out. Now common sense will teach you that.

Q Well what do they get out of it?

A What does Fords get? One area of Fords will gang in if this things successful, and believe me they're trying their best to make it successful, you'll see less supervisors. 'Cause the hourly ranks will actually run the zones.

Q Say a little bit more about that. That's a feeling I have too.

A Well, the concept of the program is, you'll have a leader. Now our sons going to Japan in February, he's being hired at Mazda down in Flat Rock. What the leader is, he's the overseer really. He functions as a supervisor, he makes sure the operators have the tooling and necessary equipment to do their job with. He assists if there's any kind of problems. But yet is classified as an hourly employee. So if you look at the difference in the rate of pay, to what that supervisor would get, and what the hourly ranks will receive, and they start below what we're making now, they don't need supervisors. They can do away with them. So the salary ranks are also gonna shrink. But now the way they got it set up, if you've got fifteen people and to show how far they're going on this thing, and you're in the group of fifteen; say you and I worked on the sealer deck, and I happened to be the leader, if Rick takes off, that leaves fourteen people; they don't give you no help; those fourteen people get in and pick up that load. Now, if Rick becomes a problem child, on the sealer deck, and doesn't come to work like he should, that group of people talks and try to get 'em straight, and the final thing it comes down to, they make determination if you stay or leave. Now I'm talking about hourly ranks of people. That's what they're looking for in this E.I. process. That's really what

they're looking for.

Q So it's really a form of destruction in the union versus the company?

A Absolutely.

Q You slipped something in, you said your son is going to Japan and is going to get a job with Mazda?

A Right.

Q Give me a little sense of what's that like... I'm trying to interview some folks that are going to Mazda because there is a few in the plant, what do you think of that? Tell me how this got...

A Well our son is working now at Hydromatics. He's got a contract through Bar-Teck(?). Now Bar-Tech is a minority firm. They do engineering and research. He's automatic transmissions. The monies are good, he has no retirement, he has no holiday pay, and as far as I know there's no coverage for medical leaves, due to sickness or accidents or whatever. He likes the job, and I think the people's been good to 'em. But because of the benefits that Mazda will have to offer, and that choice of him going was strictly his, I pointed out to him where I seen the benefits to it. But I let him make him final choice on it, I think with the retirement program, the hospitalization, so on and so forth, and hopefully he'll get married and get out pretty soon you know and he'll need those insurances, he'll have a better future for 'em. And that's one reason I guess he selected you know to accept what Mazda offered 'em.

Q And they are going to send him to Japan? Here comes a semi-skilled or assembly line, you're going to get a trip to another country... A

A What they did...

Q It's a lot different from coming up in 1951 yea?

A Jimmy submitted an application to Mazda. At that time, I think they's something like a hundred thirty or seventy thousand people submitted an application. And no efforts on my part, maybe someone else, I spoke to one individual to see if he could 'em. Now whether he helped him or not, I don't know. But it's immaterial. They called him down, he went through I think it was five interviews. They's five different stages that you go through. And what they do Rick, I guess they analyze you, to see your capabilities as much as possible. Well fortunately, I guess it's fortunately, I say it's fortunately; they liked the way he talked, the way he conducted himself. And having a years of experience at Hydromatics through Bar-Tech out here, he knew a little bit about what they were looking for, and I guess his interviewed impressed 'em. They selected him as a leader, they gonna send him to Japan for thirty days. There gonna train 'em in the leadership roles, and what a leader's responsibilities are. And then he'll come back, and that'll be his function at the Mazda Plant in Flat Rock.

Q Can I ask you a few questions?

A Sure.

Q What did they do at the interviews? What did they ask you?

A Well...

Q This is Jimmy, Jr. right?

A The first one was a two hour written test on math, reading, comprehend, follow instructions, taking out bad parts. The second one was two hour

interview with two other people and they asked me questions. How I conduct myself, they threw certain problems at me. The other one was a five hour test, you worked with six other people, and you solved problems and you worked together. Then there's another two hour preemployment physical, and then you had another five hour test after that of work assembly in the plant; they watch how you work.

Q My physical was I bent over and coughed to see if I had a hernia or not. Everybody who is hiring at Mazda is going through this?

A Yep.

Q No matter what job they're going to get?

A If they fail one part. At the beginning they say the testing and stuff don't matter, but after I finished over, I asked the lady how I did on my physical 'cause I didn't hear nothing from that, and she goes well if you failed one part of the test, you wouldn't be where you're at.

Q What do you think about it? Does it make the job seem special? Do you think you're going to have some security at Mazda?

A Yea. G.M. ain't looking to good. And not down gradin' the American products or nothing, but out where we're at now, we ordered transmissions from foreign people and everything.

Q (Back to Jim, Sr.) What do you think about... This is where America is at this moment, right? Sort of the end of a certain relationship in the union and the American auto industry and Mazda coming in to Flat Rock. Dee, who I just interviewed, she's the one who used to paint the Mazda sign down in Flat Rock black and tried to erase it. Do you think that they should be allowed here? Do you think the union should have a

different position?

A I have no objections to them coming here and manufacturing. But if you really look at the overall thing, they're no different from what Ford and General Motors are. What I'm saying is, how many places is Fords and General Motors and even Chrysler; Iacocca talks a good story, but he does just the opposite of what he says in my opinion. And they go to Mexico and they go to Brazil and they go to Australia; anywhere they can go for cheaper labor, and import it back in. So Mazda's gonna do the same thing. Certain parts will be manufactured in Japan to be shipped here for assembly. But there's one good thing about it at least, they're gonna give twenty five hundred, three thousand people jobs, they wouldn't have a job. So that's one good aspect of it. But other than that, I don't see any advantage in it.

Q In the plant, the Ford Plant, for a long time they were bumper stickers; stop the Japanese invasion, Japan/Pearl Harbor, what was that bumper sticker people had?... Remember Pearl Harbor. Now you're going to go work for a Japanese Corporation. Twenty five percent owned by Fords. Does that matter to you? Do you...

A No. That was in the past. But still as I seen before, now down grading the U.S. car or nothing, but the foreign cars is built better than the U.S., it's more neater. Because like I was saying ordering transmissions and stuff, a foreign machine off a transmission case, they don't use gaskets between the valves body and the case. Where American's they got proxy problems and misfilled and everything. But, I know foreign is still foreign, there's no way of getting around it. Myself, I'll probably still end up driving a U.S.A. car, 'cause I've

always liked them.

Q Why do you think they can get away with not using gaskets.

A Their machine is better, and they don't go for quantity, they go for quality. Now out here, they go for quantity not for quality and that's the reason you get a lot of recalls back.

Q My father-in-law works as a... He is a parts accountant for G.M. Thirty five years, retired now. He said there is no way G.M. could match the caliberation in the machining that comes out... at this point. It's not the worker; we don't agree on a lot stuff, but he clearly doesn't blame it on the workers, you know, he says management you know, but it's something we got so out of practice in doing. How old are you Jimmy?

A Nineteen.

Q Compared to most of your friends that got out of high school with you, you're pretty fortunate I would imagine in getting a job in an auto plant, which will be U.A.W., decent pay.

A Well the way I got my job out there where I'm at at Hydromatics, where Bar-Tech is, I got it as a co-op kid. Co-op student. They come down to the auto lab teacher for the best two kids out of the class with mechanics skills and stuff. He recommended me and this other kid; and I went out for an interview, and got hired on. And I worked through my co-op year to improve myself and then they offered me a job through Bar-Tech. And then, going down here still, I'm taking a pay cut to go there, but in the long run it's gonna be better.

Q How much of a pay cut?

A Um, they still got their C.O.L.A. down there, so the only thing I'll be taking is like fifty cents a hour pay cut. But I gotta pay for my benefits out here. But I'll get 'em for free now. At Bar-Tech I got to pay 'em. But in the long run, it will be better.

Q Let me just ask one question, and then I will come back to the truck plant. I'm sure you heard your dad talk about your grandfather and the line workers, and you heard your dad talk about the union. What do you think about the union?

A I don't want you to get me wrong, I've talked with my dad before on this too. The union's good, I like the union, but I disagree with some things the union does.

Q Do you have any you want to share with me that you disagree with?

A The ones that... I see it out there and stuff, but I guess they got to help everyone like he says, but people coming back from lunch; drunk, high, and all that, and bad attendance and everything. I disagree with that. I think that man should be on his self when it comes to... If he gets caught or whatever, because I see it everyday up there.

Q Do you think that's going to happen at the Mazda Plant?

A No. I know it won't happen.

Q How do you know?

A Because they got it passed, when I went for my physical, for a drug analysis through a blood test and a urine sample, and you got to sign, and another witness takes it. And they can give you that anytime they feel that your not... What can I say, up to power, whatever.

Q Straight?

A Yea, straight. They can give you, you can take test and if you get caught with it, they said they won't handle for it down there. And another thing they're doing, there will be no eating, smoking, or drinking anything on the assembly line. All that'll be done on your own time.

Q They won't let you smoke on line? That's how it was a the Rouge when they first started.

A But they've been trying to get that where I'm out there now, and stuff, with the drug analysis and everything.

Q Well I wish you the best. I think the job you're going to have is something that America is watching. I think the whole world is watching to see what happens to our country, and what you were just saying, what we've done to other countries, is now happening here. They hire men and women? How many folks are you going to Japan with?

A I don't know. I don't even know who I'm going with. I might be the only one, I don't know.

Q I'll come back in a few years, and I'll interview you as a follow-up to it, what happens to the new generation of auto workers. Let's shift a little while just to what do you in your time off when you're not working in the plant? (Jim, Sr.) Recreation...You were talking about some dogs and stuff.

A Well, that's my biggest activity. I've got Beagles, which is rabbit dogs. I don't hunt that much with a gun, but I put a lot time in field with 'em.

Q What does that mean? I'm from Brooklyn, New York! There weren't any

rabbits when I was there.

A Well what these dogs are, they're trained to chase rabbits, and unless you've experienced it, you really wouldn't be able to comprehend the enjoyment they will give you. And I guess the biggest relaxation of the whole thing is: You're out there with the dogs, if they run a rabbit that's fine, if not, at least you're away from everything else. You get your mind off of personal problems, work problems, whatever it may be. It's just relaxing. I guess you could compare to like a person going fishing. You know you're out by yourself, and you're just enjoying what you're doing.

Q Is this something you did when you were a kid?

A Always have.

Q Did you get to do it with your dad?

A No, my dad was never involved with any type of sports; he liked baseball. But anything in hunting, he would never fool with it. Now most of the brothers, they took it up. And I guess that's how I got started, the older brothers started me in. And then, of course, when Jimmy was younger, until he got girls on his mind, he participated in it pretty good. Yea... I find it good, clean recreation. It's enjoyable. You meet a lot of nice people.

Q So you keep the dogs here?

A Yea.

Q At the house?

A Right.

Q Did working in the plant with all the overtime, especially the first

fifteen years I guess, did that create a hassle at home? And you're in the union, you're on the road a lot, you're traveling, you were just away for a week or so in Florida...

A Well, it didn't cause a great many problems for our family because at that time the kids were small, and I worked night shift. I didn't get to spend as much time with them as I wanted to, but we did what time we had free time we spent time with 'em. We went different places and done things with 'em. In fact, ah, if I couldn't go, the wife would take 'em on a vacation or whatever. But working night shift and getting off at four or five o'clock in the morning and getting back up at one thirty and two and going back to work at four, there was very little time to be with them. But we managed it. And I guess, Rick, you could say because the wife was understanding and realizing that the job come before other activities. That made matters better. And anything we did, we did together. We worked in the yard, or we went anywhere, we was always together. So that helped a lot. But a lot of familys unfortunately, they couldn't cope with it.

Q What do you mean?

A Well, I couldn't give you an estimate percentage wise, but I know it's real high in our shop for divorce rates. And I do know that a lot of it is contributed to because the people was gone so long. When they did have time off, they was so exhausted they couldn't do anything, they didn't want to do anything. And some wives are not that much understanding, they think a man is off, he should be able to do what they want to do. And when you work on an assembly line ten, twelve

hours a day, you just don't feel like doin' a whole lot. You want to sleep and get rest, and you have to go back to work. But our divorce rate in that plant there is probably one of the highest I feel in this area around here.

Q How long have you been out here in this home?

A Moved here in 1965.

Q So right after you got the job?

A Right.

Q This is considered Romulus?

A Yes.

Q So you stayed in this home for twenty years? Is it paid off?

A The home was paid off in seven years. I bought it on a land contract and due to the overtime, I guess we sunk about everything that I brought home into it. And what happened was, I bought the place, I was going to work one day and I seen it, so Debbie had just been born, so I went back home it was on a Saturday, and I told Jane about it. We lived over on... Right off of Trumbull on Merrick I believe. So anyway I went back and told her about it. I got the number. We called on a Sunday, the Real Estate. They said we'll show it to you. So it was an older couple had it, in fact, they were retired. And they was late sixties then and still living to day, 'cause they come back to see us. So we called up about it and come out. And I didn't have much money at that time. I had enough for a down payment. So we liked it, we bought it. And this is where I've stayed. I bought a land contract, I got my contract out one night, just for curiosity, I don't

know why I did it. But I didn't have a clause in there, and what my contract was, if I missed one payment, they can demand the full thing. Well not being familiar with Real Estate and being young too, I didn't know those things. So that bothered me. What if something happens and I've put into for four or five years and I took sick and I can't pay you know the first payments then I'm in trouble. I went to the bank, and I talked to the bank manager. I explained to 'em my concerns. He said don't worry about it. He said if you ever get in a position where you need help, he said, you come and see me. Of course that's business talk. He may have done it, he may have not. I'm thankful I didn't have to, but anyway just about everything I made, and like I say, I was on a land contract and there was no limit on how much I could pay on it. I stuck it in it, 'cause I was concerned about something happen and I would lose it or whatever. So in seven years time, we paid it off. Now I've spent a lot of additional money on it since I bought it.

Q Do you do the work around it?

A I've had most of this work done. But we felt the place to be, you know it's a home, it's not a house. The neighbors have all been good, we never had no real worries with none of 'em. And to me that means a whole lot. I would rather have a nice home, but a home is not everything. If you don't have the love in the home then... I can be content where I'm at. If I get along with my neighbors, which I do, I've seen neighbors that wouldn't speak to each other, live aside of each other for years. I couldn't do that. So that's one reason I've stuck here.

Q What does Debbie do?

A Debbie's a secretary. And she too, as Jimmy, started in co-op when she was a sophomore.

Q What is co-op?

A What Romulus has Rick, and I don't know if other communities have it or not, I say they do. But they provide jobs for kids that's in high school. And what it's suppose to do is give 'em training, prepare 'em in case they don't want to go to college or whatever. So Debbie was a secretary in school, she did some secretarial work in school. So then, this one place from Wayne, Uni-Trust. They wanted a part-time secretary just for small work. So they sent her down there and they hired her. So when Debbie graduated, she got a job a Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Q Downtown?

A Right. She worked there for about a year and a half. Then they had a cut back. So before she left there, she had a job at Grace Hospital, and that's where she's at now. So when she come out of school, she was like Jimmy, she was already working.

Q What is she about twenty-two?

A She is twenty-two.

Q What are you going to do? How many years to you have left? Do you have nine?

A I've got seven years left, and then I'll have thirty years seniority.

Q Before that, more than likely, the two of them will be out on their own. What are you going to do after you get retired?

A I really don't know Rick. I thought about that, and I think a person should think about things before they retire.

Q Are you going to have it all planned out like Don Shinski (?).

A No.

Q I had a great discussion with Don about retirement.

A I don't know what I will do. I would like to get in some kind of community work or something. And you know just try to stay active in some things. There's a lot of things a person can do to help other people. I get a good feeling out of that, if I help somebody, I get a good feeling from that.

Q Do you think you'll stay up here?

A Yes, I'm sure I will. I may not stay in this particular area, but I'll stay in Michigan. And that's because the wife, she says the kids will here, but they might marry and go somewhere else, you never know. But I like Michigan, I've been here long enough know, I've got used to it.

Q Are you active in church?

A Yes.

Q What kind of church and what do you do to be active?

A We go to a Freewill Baptist Church.

Q Somewhat to the church you were raised in?

A No, I was... When I attended church in Kentucky, it was the Church of God because that's what my parents belonged to. But the doctrine in the Freewill Baptist is not a whole lot different than the Church of God is. There's a few things they practice different. But I drive a church bus, my wife she's a captain, we pick up kids. And most of the children we pick up are kids that's from deprived homes really. And it's touching to work with 'em, and to see how they appreciate somebody

to take and show some concern in 'em. And I get an enjoyment out of that. Sometimes they get on my nerves, you know, they get really rowdy on that school bus, church bus. When you see your doing something for 'em, you see with tear and growth, you feel you contribute something for 'em.

Q So you bring 'em to church on Sunday for Sunday school?

A Right, Sunday.

Q How was Christmas spent yesterday?

A We spent Christmas together. It was a very enjoyable day, and we all sit around and talked, and talked about some old times and things you know in the past. And as far as Christmas, we had a beautiful Christmas.

Q What did the kids get you?

A Well... Jimmy got me two pair of pants, which I needed. Debbie got me two sweatshirts.

Q That you needed?

A Right, I needed. My mother-in-law got me a belt, and I think a pair of pajamas, which I needed, and a pair socks. So everything we got this year really, and Jane got me a coffee maker and a few other things, what we bought, we bought because we needed.

Q I had a friend who came over, he was raised in Alabama, he brought my son who is two years old, an orange, because that's what he used to get on Christmas. That was the only time they had oranges. What was Christmas like when you were comin' up? If you can think of a really special one... When you shared Christmas.

A When I was growing up, I remember this Christmas real good. Because of the financial situation, we had... I realize you know that my dad couldn't buy what I wanted, so I told him the only thing I wanted that year and it wasn't because I was sissy, but it was just something I wanted, I wanted a Teddy Bear, that's what I got. And that was the only thing I got. But now I recall that Christmas. But now today if you try to give a kid one gift, it's hard to tell what kind of tantrum they'll throw on you. But I was well pleased and satisfied with that one gift, because I knew you know, he didn't have the money to buy... And just by him getting that, that satisfied me.

Q How have you tried, and I'm sure you tried by your example if there are other ways to share those kind of values with your kids at a time when they're bombarded with V.C.R.'s and everything else that comes along with the 1980's, and with having the kind of financial security that you were able to provide. How do you maintain those values?

A Well, we've had to, even though we could've done it, we've tried to teach our children that everything they want is not necessarily good for 'em. Now we've given them some luxuries, but we've also given them the necessities of life. And we've tried to instill into 'em, the value of trying to manage and save something. If it's only two dollars a week, or five dollars a week, or whatever. We've always tried to get 'em to realize there'll be a rainy day somewhere down the road. And I believe the teachings that we've tried to set for 'em, that they comprehended that and I think they practice that. Because both the kids has been real good as far as managing their money, I think they

have. They've both got bank accounts, and Jimmy, he'll spend on his car which that's his hobby. You know people's got different hobbies, he likes his car. But they do not waste money. And I think they realize you may have difficulties I think it's paid off for us.

Q When you think about being a father, what do you like the best? In a quiet moment, what do you think has been really the best joy of being a father?

A I think the most enjoyment I have from it Rick, is seeing our children grow up in the atmosphere they've grown up in, and turn out the way they are. Now that's truth to say that as far as any great worries, other than coming in late, they never give me no worries. Now I'm not saying that they haven't done things, because we know how kids are. But as far as them doing any things and we being aware of it, like drugs or premarital sex or whatever, I've never had no trouble with 'em. Now I don't only talk to Debbie, but I've talked to this boy, because to me Rick, there's no difference in a boy and a girl. But I don't want it to happen to my daughter, and I don't want my son to go out and cause somebody else's daughter to have problems. Now I've always taught him that. If your not willing to marry a girl, then you better leave her alone, as far as sex is concerned. And I strongly believe that, that's the way I feel. And I hope that he accepts that. Because I don't want to see no girl get messed up. And because the kids have been what they are, that's have give me pleasure in 'em.

Q Your wife has been at home with the children.

A Right.

Q What did your grandfolks do?

A My grandfather he was also working in the mines.

Q In the mines?

A Yea. And I don't remember the grandfather on my mother's side. And he was ah...

Q Scotch-Irish or what, way back when?

A Well, I really don't know what my nationality is. I was told now that I was German. But as far as going back in the family tree and finding out, I never did do that. But my grandfater on my mother's side, he was a very violent man, and he was set in his ways. And to give you an example of what I'm talkin' about. Most of the southern people are Democrats by politics. His daughter, my mother's sister, she voted for a Republican one time, I don't know the party or who it was or whatever, but I do know this; she come home and told 'em, and the old man threw her out of the house. He told her to get her clothes and leave. And he run her off, his own daughter, because she voted Republican ticket. Yes sir.

Q This is when, like fifty years ago?

A Oh yea. Yes sir. And then I had a neighbor and I knew the boy this girl was going with, I went to school with her. He's a real nice guy, comes from a good family. Well, when her dad found out she was dating him, his parents were Republican, he made his daughter quit seeing the boy. Now that's how politics is in Kentucky. And it's still that way today, believe me. It's still that way today! I don't care who he is, as long as he's a Democrat, he's greatest thing that ever walked, if

he's running for office. To give you an example, my dad was thrown in jail one time for walking on a picket line. And the judge that locked him up, he could've been more lenient than what he was really. But they locked him up, but come election time, dad was campaigning for him. And I asked 'em, I said why would you campaign for a guy that locks you up for thirty days. Well he said, you can't vote for a Republican, I said dad you can't vote for a guy that don't support your causes. But they go ahead and elect those people, and the Democratic party knows that in eastern part of Kentucky. That's what they know.

Q It sounds like the same problem that we have today, you know, toward the U.A.W. is leaning to the Democrats regardless of what that individual stands on.

A That's right.

Q There's something about party politics in the United States that doesn't serve the best interest sometimes. What... Your son was saying that one of the things that bothers him the most about the union is it sort of unquestionably support and defends the drinking, drugs, absentism and that kind of individual problem, the way people respond. How do you deal with that? What do you think about it? Is there anything to do about that situation, and what I've seen from the union over the last ten years, is that the union is basically now a benefits organization; provides good benefits, created some jobs for health and safety, standard's person, it's created some jobs, now it's got the E.I. person in that part of the union too, gets paid by the company. It's not what your grandfather was part of... Is there anything the

union can do about all the drinking? There's a substance abuse person now.

A Rick, the programs they have in place, employee assistance programs, is a good program. It's beneficial to those that will take advantage of it. But now, unless an individual recognize he's got a problem, you're not going to help him. You can throw all the programs you want to out there, and if people doesn't take part in it, it's not going to help 'em. Now I don't know what we can do for 'em. But now I do know this, I believe in mankind, and we're all subject, and I've told Jimmy this, we're all subject to make mistakes and fall into ditches. If you ever fall in, you better hope somebody's there to pull you out. And the union is there, now I believe we should exert all means we have available to us to help people. It's easy for a person to get on drugs, get on alcohol or whatever. But I think the program should be in place, and if they're willing to admit yes I've got a problem, I want help. At least if we help one person, out of all the thousands we may have, then to me, the program's worth it.

Q What do you think would happen if the company came up to the union not this contract, the next contract and said you don't need a union anymore. How do you think people would respond?

A Rick, I'll be honest with you. I hope I'm wrong, but my personal observation on the way the people talks, I'd probably be safe at saying that thirty percent of those that's union members today, would agree to that statement. I believe that.

Q What do you think the truck plant is going to look like the day you retire or actually ten years after you retire?

A Well, if the truck plant remains open, and that's a big if. A lot of people don't realize that, but I'll...

Q What do you think it depends on?

A What the truck plants existence depends on really, is if they get those paint booths built. Now I'll going into that, and I'll come back to your other question Rick. Right now, we're limited to how much production we can run, we're at the capacity now of what we're capable of doing. I can't see Ford Motor Company investing a hundred and thirty million dollars or approximately that to rebuild paint booths if they can't increase production. Now anytime you invest monies, you've got to run to get that money back. Yet that can't operate with the fall out they had, because the environmental protection agency.

Q They can't run what?

A At the present time, what's happening now with our location, we're admitting too many chemicals into the air, paint fumes, mists, and particles.

Q Right into Wayne air.

A Right. Now you combine that with the land fill they have right in behind us, and you can see what the citizens in that community is going through out there. By 1989, I believe, somewhere in that area, if they don't correct that problem, it's a twenty-five thousand dollar a day fine for every day they operate.

Q By 1989?

A Right. But I just can't see them investing that type of money... There puttin' in a lot of automation into that plant. But the members

fail to realize, the automation can be pulled out a lot easier than it can be put in. In other words, if they want to pull it and relocate it, they can do that. So this money is not going to be wasted if they decide to close it, they can still use it in other locations.

Q You mean they just pick up the robots and move them?

A Absolutely, absolutely. They can take 'em anywhere they want to take 'em and install 'em. They've got a lot of facilities that could use 'em. But what bothers me a lot about the truck plant as far as the future of the plant is concerned, year before last, they put a second shift on, but Kansas City got that second shift. Now some things hurt us in that location we're in. And the things that were given to us was, the cost of doing business in this state. The work force that we have, and the shipping district, distance that we have here, so they felt by going to Kansas City that they could manufacture a truck cheaper and ship it back, and still make more money than what they would here. They tell us, now this is company figures, it costs us forty some dollars more to build a truck at the Michigan Truck Plant, than it does in other truck plants out of state. And the reason for that is, the Workman's Comp., absentism, they combined everything together to get the cost. So when they was deciding about a second shift, that's some of the reasons they rejected the Michigan Truck Plant.

Q Do you believe that?

A No. I don't believe that, but that's the argument they give us. But they took the second shift to another location. And I do know this,

the only thing that's keeping us going around now, is the Bronco. 'Cause with the number of units we build in Broncos versus the F models. If the F models was all that we had, they could pick that up in another location.

Q But we're the only ones that make Broncos?

A Absolutely, absolutely.

Q How could they increase production at the plant?

A See what they look at, we're running forty three and a half in some zones, and forty four and a half in others, well if you're going to invest a hundred and thirty million dollars and naturally they'll automate the paint booth, so you can kiss the painters there goodbye.

Q How many people do you have out there, about fifty people?

A I'm just guessing, I'd say there's about thirty five to fifty. But even with that loss of manpower, they want to build more units per hours than what they're now building. So without being able to do that, it would take 'em years and years to get that investment back. So that's what they're looking at. Now they could go in there and modernize the plant, extend the lines, and maybe increase production, but the way they'r set right now, there's no way they can.

Q The ways the lines are set in?

A Right.

Q Has there been a big elimination of jobs, of opeations and stuff?

A The way the contract's written now, with the pep bank which their banks absorbed at this time. The agreement they have on the guarantee on the income, they haven't eliminated that many jobs. But I look in the next

contract, when they get the language in there, that they'll be able to do so. That they eventually... There not going to automate and put millions of dollars worth of automation in the plant and keep the same amount of people. Now they say through arbitration, and retirement, and this and whatever, that's the way they'll get rid of 'em. But now I don't believe that.

Q What is the pep bank, and explain how that was something that was gained in the last contract. And also, there is a real negative thing, it's a two chair system isn't it?

A Well, what they did on the pep bank was, that was employees that were laid off, they was monies for a fund. So the companies had to pay these employees regardless if they worked or not. So if they'd want to pay them to stay at home and never bring 'em in and they used them on any job in the plant for absentism or medical leaves or whatever the case may be. And then as jobs become available, they would slop these people in these availabilities. So we increased on this last one, we used all of our pep bank up. All the people's we had was about twenty. They was enough jobs available to absorb those people. So we no longer have a pep bank. And Wayne Assembly doesn't have a pet bank, so what they're saying in essence is, that you don't have nobody in the pep bank unless we have a reduction in force, there will be no more additional people coming in. See that's the way it's set up for 'em.

Q You have been around, you've seen... How do you see the cut backs in classification? That's a concession when they cut back the classifications, and the fact that a new employee they now doesn't get

paid the same thing.

A No.

Q Under ten years there's different rules even now in shop rules. If you could share some of that in the classification in the shop rules, how you see that, and how significant that is.

A Well, I don't understand how the international union could accept an agreement with the company with a person with under ten years seniority. But what they have, from you and I used to know, is progressive penalties. That employee with less than ten years, up until he gets thirty days off, now that's progressive penalty, he's not entitled to a grievance. Now, under the old system, we could get one penalty, we got a grievance, but that less than ten employee don't have that. I don't know why the union give that option. Now that have what they call a review boards made up of the company and the union.

Q Part of the E.I. concept.

A And if you take a day off, and to give you an example of how far they've gone on this thing, even a doctor's letter, is unexcusable. That's not an excuse to be off. So what they do, they is they access a penalty, and that penalty grows, but it's on paper. You serve no time until they get you with thirty days. At that point in time, you're entitled to a grievance. Now if they give you a penalty for a day in between, you have a right to appeal that, whatever they may give you. It can be appealed, they go back if you've got additional evidence from the committee man and you present it to 'em, they look at it. Now some are overturned, but very few are. And we had a guy come in, I recall

this one very well. The guy had a death in the family, they hit that guy with a penalty. They progressed his penalty on it. Now to me, that's unfair, and why can you aside, and I'm going back to international union, and they probably got a better answer for it than what I have, but how can you set aside a group of people, paying the same amount of dues as you or I are paying with fifteen years, but yet he's not entitle to the same representation. It does not make sense to me, I don't understand it. As far as reduction in classification, when it gets down to it, the whole concept of that is in my opinion, if they want to move you off of one job to another one, they'll do it with no additional pay and it's gonna eliminate some pay scales for some people. And it's gonna give the company more leverage to move you from one job to another, that's all it amounts to.

Q We still have a shift laid off in the plant, the high in our plant used to be twenty-eight hundred, I think, it's down to twelve-hundred something. now?

A Twelve something now.

Q Why does the union go along with this overtime while people are still laid off?

A Rick, I really don't know. And I know the united mine workers at one time had a clause, if anybody was laid off, one individual, there was no overtime worked. But they eventually lost that. But know I don't know how the union would go along with letting a company work ten hours a day, six days a week, and you got people laid off, I never could figure it out.

Q Would you like to work in the international?

A No sir.

Q How come?

A From what I've observed at the international level, you're a yes man. I've got a nephew, he works for Mark Stet (?) at the Chrysler, and he and I have had some discussions. And I'm not one that could set back and bite my tongue when I disagree. I indicated earlier, I've got in trouble a lot times for it, but I think people respect for my positions, maybe not always agree with my positions, but they do know that I'm gonna say things. And I could not sit down there and support a program that I wasn't comfortable with, regardless of who said it.

Q Do you think that the union has a future? I've asked this question in a number of ways, but does it have a future? What will it do and what will it be?

A I hope it's got a future, 'cause if the union ever goes, then this country's gonna be in bad shape. Real bad shape, worse than what it is. But I'll say this, that if the union's not very careful in what they do, they've already weakened themselves to a certain extent, I'm afraid ~~they'll get so weak, that they'll never gain back.~~ The only good that I can see out of this, Rick, is coming, and if it ever happens and it's a possibility, that the people would unite together and this could very well happen very easily, the working class of people could actually see what they're up against in the corporation, at that point in time, they may come together as a group; and say look, we've got a common cause, a common goal, so unless we combine our

efforts and stick together we can't overcome it. Now I can see that happening.

Q How do you see that happening?

A Well, as I said earlier, until an individual, most people today, until they've got their backs against a wall, they can turn their head and look the other way on another individual, regardless of how much and suffering and pain they may have. But you get enough of 'em together, and enough of 'em hurtin'...

Q There's just not enough yet?

A That's right, absolutely. That's one thing I... That's one that bothers me about affirmative action and those programs. I wish that Jessie Jackson, or whoever is speaking for those people, would not preach just one race of people, talk about the poor class of people. When you talk about the poor class of people, you're talking about eighty percent of the population of this country. And what he does, and he does what he does, he divides the races. Now you've got the Arabs over here, and you know this country here is got most immigrants of any other country of the world, you've got these over here, Caldeons ~~over here, whites here, blacks there, or whatever it may be,~~ they're all divided. But don't get up there and represent one class of people. Represent the American people. Put 'em all in the same category. If you stop preaching one thing, for one group of people, and preach for all people, you get 'em to realize what he's saying, hey what he's saying can help me and help my family. I think you would see a big turnaround in this country.

Did you see that when he went out to the farmers.

A Uhm uhm.

Q Or at the Ypsi plant that wasn't all plant, it was clearly black and white. But he's perceived as only speaking for black people. He talks about a rainbow coalition, but that's not heard.

A Rick, what I mean by Jessie Jackson, and he did it just recently, I don't believe that I should do it for the whites, I don't think that Jessie Jackson or Coleman Young should do it for the blacks, when you get up there and tell people to vote your color, now to me that's leaning that particular way, and Jessie did that. He did that. But I think Jessie Jackson, in my opinion, and I may be wrong about the man, but I think he's grandstanding for personal gain. I really do. He's looking for the Democratic party to give 'em something or do something for 'em and then he's got what he's wantin'.

Q He's not much different from Lucas?

A I don't believe so.

Q When you say the country's in bad shape, what are some of things you think about?

~~A The biggest thing I see with the country, and especially the State of Michigan, is a drug problem. I don't know what we're gonna do with it, I don't think the programs are available to help the people, and I try to teach my kids, you know, they're against drugs, but it can happen to anybody unless we get a hold on it and do somethin'. By the time you and I, if we live to be fifty-five years old, I don't know what we'll have here, I really don't. It's a shame. But now there again, see the~~

working class of people didn't introduce coke, cocaine, all this other stuff, if you go back and do some reseach, you'll find that that was a rich man's drug. He's the one that introduced it. Now the little guy he took his little joint and he smoked that and he went on about his merry way. But the hard stuff, buddy, the money man brought that in. And then it got so plentiful, that the price dropped, so they started selling it on the street to our young people. So we can blame society, we can blame our politicians, they knew about this Rick for a long time. And failed to do anything about it 'cause some of their shoulder buddies over here was doin' the same thing that they might have been opposed to and wouldn't speak out against. So that's where it all come from, they talk about our young kids. Sure they've got a problem, but society is the one caused them to have that problem. We can blame our politicians for that. That's exactly where the problem lays at.

Q What about being a father two post-teenage kids, but two that have jobs that are pretty fortunate. I look at some of the guys at work who have teenage kids, their kids aren't working now or they're working at a three dollar a hour jobs at the Burger King. What kind of future is there for the kids in our country?

A Well, really there's no future as far as material things, unless something changes. Because the jobs are not there, and I'm a firm believer in a family, there's gonna be times maybe that both have to work, man and wife, but I believe the family life has broken down because so many married couples are out of the homes. They leave 'em unattended, and they just find things in... You know kids are curious,

they're going to be into stuff, and unless you're there with 'em to guide 'em along and do things with 'em, they're gonna find something to do. And because of society and the demands on society and the things in life that people wants, they gone out and both families working, both parents, they give them worldly things, material things, and that's all they've got. Now I believe that's another contributing factor to our problem today.

Q What would you do if you were governor?

A Of this state here in Michigan?

Q In terms of drugs, in terms of family, in terms of jobs, what would you do?

A Well...

Q Beyond the education which you've hammered home pretty well. What would you do?

A Rick there's things that a politician has to do that's unpopular at times. But if a politician can't follow his conscience, and do what's good, and what he sees best for the people; that don't necessarily mean what he says is always right, but I believe you've got to follow your conscience. Now we know they're building more prisions, to have more schooling or whatever, it takes taxes. And you think they was fooling with cancer when they talk about taxes. But if it is what it takes, hey, we've got to do something to get our state straightened out. Now when Blanchard raised the tax thirty eight percent, I didn't like it, and I'm gonna tell you this, unless jobs are here and we see 'em going all the time to the southern states, nonunion states, what is there

here for arr young people. I had to leave Kentucky 'cause they was no jobs, unless something is done, young people like my children and yours or whoever, it's a possibility they might get education here, but they got to go somewhere else to get a job at six dollars and fifty cents a hour. See it's up to us as citizens of this state to maintain it and provide the services needed. And buddy, there's no free ride in this life, it cost. And people's got to learn that. But unless we get in a do something for our young people and get jobs for 'em, the crime rate is gonna continue to sore, the drug rate is gonna get worse, and we're gonna see all kinds of problems. We're gonna see it.

Q Let me complicate it a little. How can we provide jobs for our kids, when the General Motors and the Chryslers and U.S. Steel and McClouth Steel and Mazda have so much power to make the decisions to pick up and go. As long as the corporation and I call it capitalism dominates the values and culture too. It's all the same, it's material things, but they make a fortune off of selling their junk, whether it's cocaine or V.C.R.'s. How far do you go with your commitment and your conscience and your belief. You were raised on radical values. Radical meant ~~that they were human values right? Or is that fundamental?~~

A See I... What I see one thing I wrote in there and our industry here, is especially southern states, and I was surprised that how anti-union the southern states being from the south. But a lot of 'em are. But they come in our own back door, and entice people to leave. Well eventually they done some goods things here recently as far as Chrysler and a few other things. But now I see in the paper yesterday they're

not going to do anything to help McClouth Steel. So we cannot keep letting outsiders and stealing our manufacturers away to southern states or where ever they want to go because they give 'em tax breaks or whatever. We've got to do things and take a look at what's causing our industry to leave this state, and do everything within our power to keep 'em and educate our people in what we have to do in order to keep 'em in that location. It may mean raising taxes, but I'm gonna tell you something, if there's no jobs, you're not going to pay no taxes. We've done a bad job in trying to get the people to realize the importance of keeping those people in the state.

Q They did that with Pole Town, they destroyed a whole community and now G.M. after they got the ten year abatement, how they close it up and go somewhere else. It takes ten years. They pick up the technology and leave.

A That's right.

Q How in recent news is expand a little power. Do you think the government or state should own General Motors?

A Well.

~~Q Or do you think we need something totally different. Personally I just~~
think it's time for somebody with unbelievable creativity to figure out something, because I don't think anything works, but that's my opinion.

A I don't know about the government or the state owning General Motors, it might no be a bad ideal, because in my opinion I think Roger Smith's done a bad job. I don't know what his ploys are or what he's doing. Here he's throwing thousands and thousands on the street, I don't

understand that, but I'm sure there things that the federal and the local could do you know to stop some of this stuff if they wanted to. But there again, we go right back, we go right back to where they go overseas, they go to Mexico or where ever, you know, they get joint ventures and they bring 'em in and they do this and they do that. And I don't know what they can do about it, but I know one thing you take a group of people in the place running it, they don't run it properly, it's gonna fold. It's gonna fold. Now there again on Roger Smith in General Motors I surprised that the stock holders are not screaming bloody murder, you're talking about closing ten plants and possibly more, and they pay a guy seven hundred and fifty million dollars to get 'em off the board, but yet they lost of kinds of money. I don't understand those kind of things. I don't understand it.

Q You almost need a different economy where things that you use in your state are produced in your state; whether chairs, clothing; and if that means lower wages, it's a different way. People would be working and things wouldn't cost as much. Some kind of total change, where people have a chance to produce what they use. This Christmas season when we ~~look back is going to be one that is dominated by the Iran affair,~~ Reagan, trying to figure out what happened to the money they sent to the Contras, figure out what he did in relation to it. What do you see in terms of the United States, what is taking place in the government?

A Well, there is no doubt that the United States is lost a lot of influence as far as being a leader, and I can't whole heartedly disagree with those that feels that way and I'm talking about our poor

alies. You can't preach one thing, and tell them not to do something and do just the opposite.

Q Your talking about the hostages?

A Absolutely. If you expect people to stand with you and stand behind you, you can't lie to 'em. Lying is one thing, in my opinion, I don't what you are or who you are, if it don't get you today, it'll get you tomorrow. One thing about a lie, if you tell one, you've got to tell another one to cover that one up. You can tell the truth, and the truth is there, but to tell another country not to do certain things with Iran or Iraq or where ever it may be, and you go back and do just the opposite, you can't have a trust with people like that. You can't trust people like that.

Q Do you think that's part of the same problem that happened with the union?

A Rick I'm gonna tell you what I think happened to the union. The union had done great things for the working class people, but somewhere along the way, people within the union, they put more emphasis on personal gains. And what I mean by that, they've got things done for ~~themselves, for their friends, and maybe even their salaries,~~ that caused them to be less vocal than what they normally would have been. In another words they put more emphasis on their personal things, than they have those that it's trying to help, I believe that.

Q Do you think that the company should have been paying the union officials locally or does that matter?

A I think that the union should of had it set up some way that they was

taking care of it, because... I'll give you an example of how the company works, and I'm not saying with everybody, but I do know with some. When I went on my job in Health and Safety, as I told you earlier I had three thousand and some complaints and so many grievances, and I got it all on record. Since the day I went on, I keep a record. I put a lot of pressure on 'em, it's cost 'em a lot of money, caused a lot of aggravation. They called me in, Stu Martin was the Vice President of the union at that time, they wanted to know what my problem was. I asked what did they mean? Why are you stirring up so much trouble? I said well I've got problems on the floor.

Q You mean the Vice President of the union called you?

A No no. He was with me when they called me.

Q Oh he was with you when the company call you?

A When the company called me. They said what would it take to get you to back off some? Well I played the dumb role, I knew what was coming down. I'd never been approached in that manner, but I'd heard of it. So Stu was setting there, industry relations was there, and I said what do you mean? Well what we're saying is, what would it take to get you ~~to back off some? Before I had a chance to say anything, which I~~ wouldn't of directed that question anyway. He said would it take twelve hours a day? I said twelve hours a day? He said yea, if we pay you twelve hours a day would you back up some? I said no. He said will you take seven days a week? Now you're talking a lot of money Rick.

Q You're talking eighty thousand dollars a year.

A You're talking a lot of money. I said know I wouldn't back off for seven days a week. He said just what would it take? I look at 'em and I said I'm gonna tell you something. What it would take to get me to back up, is you take care of the problems. Now that's the only way that I'll back off. Stu and I left the meeting, and I was more mad than anything else, Stu said Jim he said you're crazy. I said what do you mean? He said buddy that's a lot of money. I said let me tell you something Stu, I said my pride means more to me than all their money. I said if I had somebody to hurt on something that I knew that needed to fixed, I couldn't live with myself. I said they can take their money and keep it, 'cause all I want to do is take of the problem that the people's got. Now unfortunately, all people's not like that Rick. Because you see trade offs and grievances, you see things that only certain people see. It's unfortunate, the company knows how they operate... It's like playing poker really. If you play poker with a person long enough, you can almost read, that they've got your bluff or if you really got a hand, that's the way the company is. They try you on every form and fashion to see how they can work and how they can go around you, and once they learn that, they've pretty well got you controlled whether you realize it or not. They sure have.

Q That's a very powerful statement to the example you just gave Jim.

A That actually happened.

Q I believe it. I know one person I interviewed talked about how all he had to do was punch in one time during the day and he didn't have to punch or out or he could punch out and not punch in, and that would be

a weeks pay. So you can take a lot of advantage from the company if you want. There's a lot of possibilities to take of number one. What has been the proudest moments of having the union position you have and what has been the hardest part? The most fulfilling and the most...

A Well, my job to me is, it's a pleasure every day. And if I do one thing Rick, and this is my philosophy, I accomplish one thing, hopefully I do more in a day's time, and if I get one thing accomplished for somebody, then I've done something worth while. When I go in that shop, when we go back to work, if I only get one thing done, for one individual, then I've done something worth while. And I've been pretty successful in doin' that, and that's my intent, that's my goal to serve that people out there and do the very best I can for 'em. And I ever get to the point to where I can't and feel any different, then I'll give the job to somebody else. 'Cause I want to represent the people and I want the people if they live to be leave there, to be able to enjoy retirement, and if you're dead with cancer, or your crippled from being injured or whatever, you can't very well enjoy it. And I don't care how much money you make, or how much you have, if you leave there in bad health, it's useless. If I could walk out flat broke and enjoy life more than a guy can with a million dollars that tied up in a bed somewhere with life equipment hooked up to 'em you know. So it's... Health and Safety job is a lot different than just a regular committee job in my opinion, 'cause you can see things being done and you get a thrill out of that, 'cause you've taken care of some problems. And you've got a lot more leverage on Health

and Safety than you have than just being committee.

Q Why is that?

A Well you've got the state...

Q The law?

A You've got the federal government you've got the state, you've got the grievance procedure and the international union. And all I have to say about 'em, they are very strenuous on health and safety matters.

Q You also have the company now saying I don't want to spend all of this money on...

A Right.

Q The medical expenses that are coming up in the Workers' Comp. cases. So you're in a negotiable position. What is the hardest part of the job? The most frustrating?

A Well, the most frustrating part of the job is... Is trying to get something done, that might not be an immediate danger, but the time it takes to get those things done. And I'll give you an example of what I saying. I've been six months trying to get... We got one tire down there that weighs eighty-five pounds. Now this guy's lifting everyone up above shoulder level. ~~The doctor looked at the job, the engineers~~ looked at it with me, and agreed, yes he needs some help. The monies have been appropriated to the proper channels, I think it was twenty-six thousand dollars to have it installed. But because production fell, it would interfere with their work load. They balked on it. Well I've argued and argued for six months, so I finally got to the bottom of it and seen where the problem really lied at. And that

was with Charlie White and I was surprised to find that out about Charlie White. We had a meeting just recently about it. He told 'em.

Q That's the foreman over there?

A Right. He told me that the reason he's opposed to it because it would slow production. And I told 'em, I said Charlie I'm gonna tell you something; I don't care how you feel, or what you say, it's going in. I said you're concerned about production, I'm concerned about the man's back 'cause his point will win. I told Hurdle (?) then, he was in a meeting also, assistant plant manager, I said I want it in, I want you to quit fooling around with it. So when we go back after this shut down, it's supposed to be installed for him. There's no reason, Rick, for six months, after the monies had been appropriated from the division. The local management take that position and tie me up, and keep going back and forth balking about putting that it in there. So those are the kind of things that perturb me.

Q You didn't even have to do a grievance on this?

A No sir.

Q This is just something that you've been able to push from your position?

A Right.

Q Why would a guy lift eighty-five pounds over his head all day?

A Well.

Q If the people said I'm not doing it anymore, they have that thing in there.

A Absolutely. To give you an example Rick on what we got out there.

I've got a small stature guy now in the rear spring job, Joe Reng (?) you might know Joe. At one time when we had the buses, we had a spring that weighed ninety, ninety-five pounds, big spring. So I had a hoist installed there, and the hoist is still there, this was back years ago. Now the springs we run they may thirty-five, forty pounds, but for a small guy, and if you do enough all day it's a lot of weight. So the other day, Joe stopped me, the job... He wanted something done for the job. I said Joe, I said why don't you use the hoist? He said well, it takes too much time. I said Joe, the hoist is there, if you don't have time to do the rest of the job then take some work off. I said use the hoist. Rick, you can't get 'em to understand. To use the proper equipment and then if the time is not there to do the complete job, they've got to take something off. But they're actually a scared to take the company on. They're a scared to take 'em on. That's the whole thing in a nutshell. They will not take a position. But I'm gonna tell you something, they's no way buddy, that I'd throw eighty-five pounds up on that frame every day. No way.

Q Do you think that folks in the plant appreciate you?

~~A I think the majority of them do. I hope they do. And I hope when I leave there that I'll have contributed something for them and make matters better for 'em. And what I try to do Rick, is treat everybody the same. I don't care who it is, I take care of it. And I hope when I leave there, if people look at me and say well, he tried to represent the membership of the whole. 'Cause if I couldn't do that, I just don't want no part of it.~~

Q I didn't know your dad, but I think you dad would be real proud of you.

A I think he would.

AT THIS POINT THE CONVERSATION SHOULD HAVE ENDED. RICH YOU TOLD JIM THANK YOU FOR HIS TIME. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THIS LAST PART WAS RECORDED OVER THE EARLIER PART OF YOUR CONVERSATION, SO I WILL TRANSCRIBE IT AND YOU CAN PLACE IN ORDER. THIS IS TAPE LABELED: 3B.

THIS IS PICKING UP IN THE MIDDLE OF A CONVERSATION.

Q Say what you mean about this documentary, people's eyes are sleeping, run that back, it's very powerful what you just said.

A Well, if people could actually see the conditions... Now I can set in front of that t.v. and watch Angola, and you know the poverty level there, if it don't do something to your heart, and bring some water to your eyes, in my opinion there's something wrong with you. You have no compassion. And the American public is not educated in these areas, they don't see these things.

Q How come?

A I don't think they want 'em to see it, they don't want 'em to realize what's going on. They's no reason in the world Rick why we're the richest nation in the world, for people to go, even in our own country, the conditions they're going in. Medical costs. Medical treatment not being given; food, shelter, clothing. Literally thousands and hundreds of thousands of 'em, if the American people could see this, it might make 'em start putting pressure on the politicians. Hey, you guys got to get up and do something. 'Cause if you look at those people and put yourself in their category, buddy it's gonna do something to you.

Q Would you say that most people in the plant think folks who are on welfare are just too lazy to get a job? Folks in foreign countries take all the money we've given them and their own people steal it, and

they really like to live that way. Yet they all want to over here too and steal our jobs, they want the easy life or something. That's sort of the sum up of the views that you get.

A What I get out of 'em Rick, now you take the City of Detroit, and I think the makeup is seventy percent black, the majority of Detroit is on Welfare. Not at their choosing now, but overall, there's more whites on welfare in this state than there is blacks. But the public don't know that. And they think they's a bunch of deadbeats. Now if there is jobs available to these people, they're gonna work. The majority of 'em is gonna work; those that's able to work and wants to work. They don't want to bring their kids up in those surroundings. But until we start putting monies into programs and getting training, and providing work for 'em, they'll never come out of it.

Q Why do you know this and I can think of one person from Pike County on my line, you don't know that, he doesn't have the same view. What makes people different? Why are you different?

A Rick, I guess you really got to live it and see it.

Q Is it your age?

A ~~Well, see actually when I was in Kentucky as kid, I was actually in~~ poverty then, and didn't realize it because we was all in poverty. But when you get away from there, and you see the things in life that you can't have, then you realize just how bad off people are even in the south, and there's no reason for that. When corporations are making literally billions of dollars, on their profits, there's no reason for that to be tolerated and going on. I'm gonna tell you something, it's

a shame when small children can't get the milk they need. I just don't know what can be done. But I'm gonna tell you one thing, this country is gonna pay, and they're gonna pay dearly one of these days, for what's going on, I believe that. I really believe it.

Q When you say that, what are you thinking about?

A I believe that the time will come, if time exists, that the working class of people will begin so depressed and so down trotted that they'll unite together. I believe that, 'cause I can see right now and the politicians and the money people, keep pushing 'em back. You can only push people so far and then they rebel. And when that happens, you're gonna see, if you and I are living, and it could possibly happen in our lifetime. You'll see a uprising in this country. Now I believe that.

Q In my words, not your's, do you see a second American revolution? Is it something that might happen?

A It's a possibility. If enough people are put agains the wall and suffer the way some people are suffering today, it could happen tomorrow if enough of 'em are put there. Where right now they's enough held above that line who are just existin', and the rest of 'em waitin' for a hand out. That's what I mean, if the journalists would put out more documentaries and put out facts and not just talk... They've got statistics showin' who's on what, and who's getting this. I believe the American people would turn around. Quit preachin' for one group of people, one race of people, and preach for their working class of people. And show the American people what's going on. Now you know

Rick, Iacocca's not worth fourteen million dollars over there at Chryslers.

Q Fourteen million?

A Fourteen million dollars. He's not worth that kind of money.

Q No body, no human being.

A No sir, and in fact, he said he wasn't, he said but I'm gonna take it if they give it to me. But these areas... We've got the same thing. A guy was talking to me about the shop, and I asked would you be willing if it was possible to give up a dollar and a half on the hour to get a second shift back? Why no. I said that's the problem. All's you think about is yourself. Not that the company couldn't afford to do it, but if it come down to that. Hey, buddy, everybody should have the same opportunity, they should have the same opportunity. I don't believe in just giving people things because they say they're entitled to it. But I think they should have the same opportunity, I sure do. I wish they would show more documentaries. And I'm gonna tell you gettin' back to documentaries, the very reason the government don't push this stuff no more, it's like alcohol; they know what alcohol's doing to people. It's the tax dollar off of it. They're not about to disturb that.

Q Just like the cigarettes.

A Absolutely. It's the taxes, billions of dollars a year spent in taxes on that stuff. Well they're coughers you know, they use that money for other things, they're not going to say anything about it. They'll let the surgeon general say a few things about it every now and then. If

he gets too loud, they'll quiet him down. They's a lot of wrong in this country that needs to be straightened out.

Q Why don't you write about some of these things in the Newsletter, in the Union Newspaper?

A I've never really give it a thought Rick to do that. I've always when I talk to people on one-on-one I try to instill in 'em, you know.

Q Maybe that would be a program to develop? I tried at the beginning to get the other shift on and I got responses you pretty much said, but maybe there needs to be some bold statements made in saying there's ways to deal with these, rather than just cutting everybody down. What's gonna happen the assembly plant is gonna keep their wages and high seniority. The feeder plants and supply of G.M. are gonna get rid of all the supply plants and pay them slave wages. You know rather than doing some kind of assemblance of real organizing, food for thought.

A Well I just hope things, you know, turn from where they're at. 'Cause I feel sorry for the people coming up now, especially our young people. They's nothing there for 'em, they's no way they can buy a home or raise a family, you know that. Six fifty an hour, seven dollars you can't do it.

THE END.