

VIC WILKINS

Q Why don't you tell me exactly what you are doing in the plant now, Vic?

A Now?

Q Yes, what job do you have?

A I am doing a job that the U.A.W. negotiated approximately twelve years ago. I guess they had the foresight at that time to realize that ah, the age of computers were coming faster and faster, and then, they are here now. And so I'm doing a job that the U.A.W. negotiated for hourly people to do. Basically what it is, I operate a keyboard, or ah, I set at a video display tube, what you call a CRT. And uh, I'm doing approximately forty other people's jobs that used to be there, through one tube.

Q What do you do?

A Well, I do clerical work. A lot of clerical work, and inputting information into this computer that ah... It's for the material handling department, okay. And the material handling department is the people who supply all the parts, they bring 'em in from all over the country from all over the world, bring 'em to the assembly plant, and ah, the material department are the ones who are responsible for getting that material to the jobs, so that the individuals on the line can build that damn car. And my job, in that material handling department, is accountability for all those parts.

Q Accountability to where?

A From the suppliers; whether they be ah you know Federal Mogul, or the Saline Plastics Plant, or Rosenville, or whoever the vendors are

bringing that in. Once that hits our destination, the paperwork is brought to me. I take those part's numbers, quantities, and all that shit, dates, and all of that, and I put it into the computer at my base. Once it's entered in at my base, anywhere in the plant, they can go in and see if it's on-hand. Dearborn can go in there and see if it's on-hand. Anybody can track it down through what I do.

Q So, for example, you come in, what time do you start your day?

A Well, because of who I am, I have no set hours. I don't have a particular time that I go in anymore. I go in when I'm needed and leave when the job is done. Therefore, I'm doing twelve to fourteen hours a day. Okay.

Q Do you like that kind of flexibility?

A No, I don't. No, I don't, I think that it's ridiculous. The computer yes, you have an advantage of it because it's instantaneous okay it's there. What about these other fifty people I'm putting out of work? Even though they were salary, they still are human beings.

Q There was alot of salary people?

A It was all salary jobs that it knocked out. It's like a ghost city up in the front. It used to be... Let's put it this way, in the front offices up there, five years ago, there were almost four hundred employees clerical people. You go up there now on the night shift, there is three guys up there. It's just these vast offices up there empty.

Q You're working at the car plant, not the truck plant?

A Right. I work at the Wayne Assembly Plant.

Q How did you get this job? I'm sure a lot of people must want this job.

A Well because as far as seniority goes, I don't have that much seniority in the car plant. I have sixteen years.

Q How did you get this wonderful computer job? The auto worker of the eighties and nineties?

A Well, as I was telling you, I don't... in the car plant, I don't have that much seniority okay, sixteen years, sixteen Jesus. Sixteen years, but that's nothing, I work with a guy, this is funny, this guy's got forty-three seniority, forty-three years and he got bumped by a higher seniority man.

Q Why don't people retire? Thirty years and out the union fought for it?

A 'Cause they're just fools man. You know you got a guy there who has a mentality you know they live for today and there's no tomorrow and with all that seniority, the money they're making, they're broke. You take an old... How does it go? There's nothing like an old fool you know. Here's a guy that has got all that seniority, approaching seventy years of age, and he's running around with a twenty-three year old women. That's nuts. You know, that's crazy. But it goes on. The same dude snorting coke out in the hallway, he's crazy. But anyways, the job ah, it goes back on beyond the car plant as you well know, I was an employee at the Michigan Truck Plant for ten years, and I was also a union representative and I amongst other things, I worked on the line, I worked in the material handling department there. And ah...

Q I forgot that.

A Yea, I was over there. I think it was in 1980 when the big recession started hitting okay. The first layoffs we were facing over there at the truck, I think that's when, I'm not sure. Ah, even though I was relatively high seniority employee at the truck plant, you know in my mind, well there's no doubt in my mind that ah, I was placed out of the plant. As a matter of fact, I am the highest seniority person, and also, one of the first ones to go out of the truck plant and be kicked over to the car plant. Now, I find that in retrospect, you look back, how in the hell can that happen? I didn't even question it, I just wanted to get the hell out of there because of the everyday hassles. And the hassles being from the damn union. People that I thought were my closest friends, okay, turned around to be the ones stabbing me in the back all along.

Q What do you mean? What did they do? I won't be mentioning names, by do want to store this.

A Well, what happened was, in the last... Well, like I said being a union representative you know I watch what goes on you know in the plant now as opposed to what was going on twelve, fifteen years ago. It's completely different. It's still my contention to this day, that if the U.A.W. wasn't there, the people would probably organize. They're just policeman in the way doing a job for the company, you know, that's it. And uh, I don't want to be a you know a romanticist by telling you that I thought that I did my job correctly. To this day, I still have a hard time even talking or communicating with

anybody in the Tireman Plant. They are... I don't choose to be like them, and I don't want to be like them, but yet, this big reversal has come about. Now, everybody is, it's nuts.

Q What do you mean?

A What do I mean? Well, I'll give you a parable to work with. Fifteen years ago, I'd go in, as a representative, I'd go in the offices. And I'm sitting there trying to negotiate for a lousy fifteen minutes because it meant that this man on a line was... it was important to him, it was a principle then. The money was nothing, okay. But the fifteen minutes was the principle of the damn thing to show that boss he was right. And I wanted that fifteen minutes. If I saw that I wasn't getting anywhere, one of my tactics was, I would pick up a chair and throw it at 'em. And just tell 'em they were you know, that I wanted it and I was gonna get it damn it. It was just a tactic and I would go out of the place, it was a setup that we have, and the other guy would just say that you got 'em so damn mad, he really wants that blah, blah. It's just like the good cop, the bad cop, you know you can trust this one, but you can't... Well we had... Now ah, today, that's absurd, nobody would even think of doing anything like that. Now, it's ah, write ten grievances, give up nine to get one. And the only one will be given to a friend or etc. The man paying his dues working has.... it's changed Rick. Nothing's there.

Q Why do you think it's changed?

A Why? I think everybody's so damn afraid of losing the job, that they'll do anything to keep that job. And so they just, they won't

fight. They won't fight for their rights. You seen that... Well, I kind of applaude the men out there at G.M. you know the men and women out there for standing up, they say bullshit, enough is enough. Hey fuck 'em, let 'em take all the jobs. Shut the fucking country down. You can't you know, but you're seeing now, you're seeing a lot of scared... I mean it's not only where I work, it's everywhere. People are so god damn araid of losing a job.

Q In a sense, do they have a right to be? Is it a legitimate fear?

A Well sure! I mean it's legitimate from this point. We all have to eat, and we all need to beat these elements here. But it's not fair. It's not fair... And you know, I'm somewhat caught between a rock and a hard place with the job that I do. I set and... You know here I am you know, arguing over that, but yet I'm taking a job. But the job that I took, or that I have, I had to more or less... I didn't sue them through the... The job was never put up on a board for bidding, I take that back, yes it was. But because of what the nature of what it is, it's a computer okay. The average man in that plant, I think the grade level of education here is ten years. Most people that fall into that category, and I don't like doing that, but most of 'em and I saw it with my own eyes, if I hadn't seen it I probably wouldn't believe it, they set in front of that keyboard and just freeze up. Intimidated by it, but those who weren't intimidated by it was just a resistance agains a machine. Man against machine you know. So the job was in a sense was posted, but nobody wanted it. There were a few that took it, ah, and have done fairly well. In my particular case,

I, when I got laid off from the truck plant, I was put to work in the body shop at the Wayne Assembly. Well, because of injuries and stuff that I got while I was in Vietnam, I'm limited to certain movements that I can do. I never, at the truck plant they never put me on a job that I couldn't do, I always performed. But the particular job they put me on there, I couldn't do it. And I told 'em that I couldn't do it, and if you can't do it, hit Michigan Avenue, as simple as that. I said no I'm not going to that, so I marched up to labor relations and uh, I threw a fit up there. And there was a general foreman named Joe Kelley over there. He got a little too close to me, and as you well... He put his hand on my chest, started shoving me, he said... I grabbed him by his fucking shirt and slammed him up against the wall, I said don't touch me. Don't even fucking think about it.

Q He didn't know who you were?

A He didn't know who I was.

Q That's what I have with my foreman now, he doesn't know who I am.

A Nobody knew anything then. Okay, there's a fella that's been around over there at the... he's been in the politics and I knew him vaguely from the union meeting, Roper, Herb Roper. At that time, I don't know what they were getting ready to do, but at that particular moment Herb Roper walked in, and before they could go any further, I just let Roper know that... I mean I threw a fit. The veins were popping out of my neck, and I said nobody in this fucking place is gonna touch me. I felt like I had entered a penitentiary, a new penitentiary and I had declared that this is my fucking turf and you're not going to

come out of it. It worked. Herb Roper come in there, and he threw a fit. They worked something out there, and the next thing I know I was being taken by a cart over to the trim department. The trim department, I was put in a particular area where they select the dashboards. People call them dashboards, but over there it's called an instrument panel okay. I worked in this particular area, it was the I.V. line where they build up the instrument panels to be installed into the automobile. My particular job was, picking, you know different ones, either they were with air or with whatever they... there were like twelve different choices I had to make. You know different colors, whether they were set up for air or whatever.

Q What could they be set up for?

A Air, ah cassettes.

Q What about digital clocks?

A Digital clocks, you know different punches were on these things for them to install. I had to read a computer printout, you know, I would make that selection, I would walk over, and I would pick the damn things up. The whole dashboard, and set it on the line okay. There were, at that time, there were five people involved on that job. Or six people, there were two, regular operators, okay, and then a relief man on the day shift and two on nights, and that was six people. Within six months, they brought in something... robotics, okay. As I looked it, I just thought well it's a sophisticated crane, the type of crane that runs on tracks. And what it did was, it made movements. It had photo sensors on there to distinguish the colors and ah, it was

controlled by the keyboard that was already programmed to make certain moves. That in essence, eliminated all of our jobs.

Q Wait, slow it down a little. Paint a picture of what this...

A As I stated to you earlier, my job was to read a computer printout, a teletype, okay. And it told me that this is a blue dashboard okay for air okay. I would go to that one and pick that up and I would set it on the line, and it would put in a rack and it carried it on through, and as it went through people did their work on it right. Okay, six people were involved.

Q What did the other people do?

A As I worked one side of the line, the other guy worked the other side of the line. We went in rotation to the machine, everything had to be in rotation okay, and ah, within six months they brought in, as I was there they said something about that I wouldn't be there very long anyway. And I said what the fuck you know. So they brought it in and they set this thing up. Now as these boards, I got out of these baskets, the baskets were approximately four by four okay, and filled with these dashboards. I think there were nine to a basket. Oh also, I forgot the hi-lo drivers involved here. They set the robot up, I mean it was like... I was quoted a figure of over four million dollars for this thing, okay. If you could see it, it just looks like a crane with a motor on it, and something controls it to make these moves. They had a arm on it, you know what they call a robotic arm. It was controlled by this big ugly blue box that set over there, Ford blue you know. It was called Gantry (?). It was actually from the

G.C.I. It was G.C.I. Manufacturing. They set it up and ah, I watched them build this thing from day to day. I would do my job, but in the process of sitting there watching these guys do this. And of course, these guys are workers just us. Some of them just technicians and some of 'em were guys that just come in and input information at this machine. Well, being an inquisitive person I asked 'em how that thing operated, and they told. And they gave me a little demonstration on how to move it manually, I said well that's easy enough. Well lo and behold, that was to my advantage, I didn't know it at the time, but that was to my advantage. The thing... I didn't know at the time, but they were putting it in there on a trial basis. Ford Motor Company had given these people the money to test this thing out. And they were recording everything, anything that went wrong, they actually reported it. But one day the thing broke down, it just stopped. And I went back over to the computer and made the few moves there on the keyboard and got it operating again. Somebody saw it, wanted to know what I was doing fooling around with it. I said... I figured, well, here we go up to the front office again, gonna get popped again. Well it didn't happen. That didn't happen. As a matter of fact, the guy's name is Ryan he is one of the engineer, now he is the assistant plant manager, I think his name is Porter. His trade, he's an engineer okay. He wanted to know I learned how to that. And I told him, I said the people in the company showed me how to do it. First thing led to another, I was in charge of this machine, that was my... I was given the job of babysitting the machine. I no longer had to do any

manual work. But if the machine broke down, I had to do the job okay. I said hey, that's cool you know.

Q That's when you were telling me that there is a real benefit to computers and robots.

A Yea.

Q Right about three years ago I remember.

A I'm sitting here figuring hey no sweat.

Q You had the job babysitting?

A Babysitting, it's you know, out of a ten hour day, you know I'd sit there and sweep up the area and watch it to make sure it was doing it's thing you know. If it hung up, then I'd get it going. If it literally fucked up, I'd have to do it's job. So this shit went on for about a month. And ah, you know, I know you know the guy's name, I know that he's president of Ford Motor Company, Polland is his name. Red Polland. Well, I was told to ah after the shift ended, my shift ended at 4:30 in the afternoon I was told to go up to the front lockers and clean up and they give me a pair of coveralls. It had U.A.W. on one side, and Ford Motor Company on the other side. And I was given a little card by this engineer to tell them what to say, and I said for what? Well, I didn't know who this guy was, all I saw was John Littiny(?) walking around with a big group of people. And John Littiny(?) is the plant manager, he runs the place like a tyrant okay. They come around the corner and there's this little guy with red hair there. I knew he was somebody 'cause the fucker's clothes on 'em, man, I said shit look at that. Anyway the guy come up, he was

very nice, asked me who I was, and I told him who I was. He asked me what I did and I told him, I said I run this mother fucker. He said what does it do? I explained to him what it does, he said what do you think of it? And I said well, it's quite a piece of machinery, but it's you know, it's eliminating a bunch of jobs here. I was more or less sluffed off real quick. The engineer stepped in, he started talking, I was back, literally backed right out of the way. It was funny, I said oh. The following week, there was a fifty dollar bonue in my paycheck and a thank you from Red Polland.

Q The fifty dollar bonus was for what, for working the overtime?

A Working the overtime.

Q Is that embarrassing to you?

A Yea. Well they did that to get around from the union, 'cause I went to the union and showed them, I said somebody else was in, or where's the equalization of overtime, I said this is bullshit. But shortly thereafter, the fucking robot put me out of work. It wasn't three months after that. What had happened was, this thing was running pretty damn smoothly okay. I had to have an operation on my foot. So I went into the hospital. I figure everything's cool now you know. I went into the hospital, had an operation on my foot, I was out less than thirty days, healed and come backt to work, and was told that the robot didn't need me no more, that they had a programmer come in and set it up that it didn't need to be watched no more. I said so where am I at? They said, Michigan Avenue. So I was put out, not because they didn't have a job for me, I was put out because they didn't have

work within my restrictions. At that time, they wanted to put me, they said either go back to the body shop or else. I said no, it's not as simple as that. I said I can't do that.

Q They were not recognizing your restrictions?

A Right. I never complained about 'em. I was never given a physical at the Michigan Truck Plant, I mean I was given... Back then you got to understand, there was two hundred people a day standing out there to get a job okay.

Q Back when?

A Oh shit, 1970. Anyway I was, I mean there was drop your drawers, cough, and take your temperature and blood pressure that was it. You know that was literally it. As long as you could crawl or get to that job, they didn't give a fuck you know. Now, all of a sudden at this point, they said well we don't have any record of it. I said I don't give a fuck what you got, I've got records of it. Did it happen here? No, it didn't happen here, I was hurt in Vietnam. Prove it. No problem. I went to the V.A., I went through all the doctors there, got a big file, brought it back to them, and I was very politely told that they no longer had any work within those restrictions, that they were placing me on a medical layoff.

Q Explain to me those restrictions.

A Okay, I ah...

Q Also, what happened?

A To get 'em or what?

Q Yes.

A Well...

Q First tell me what the restrictions are then we'll go back later to earlier times in your life.

A Well the restrictions are, I have limited movement of my left side. I don't even know if you notice. I've got pins that run from my hip to my knee, from my knee to my ankle, and what that... and I have no muscle control under here. Under my left knee. All this is fake. I can't bend, I can, but it's very strenuous okay. I can't bend, I can walk, I walk with a limp okay. Now that I've told you, you'll probably see the god damn thing. But...

Q I've bet I've seen it over fifteen years.

A So I can't bend. Any continuous bending or stretching of the left side, it just, it goes out on me. So they told me they have no work within the restrictions. 'Cause when I come back from the V.A., they said that I had to have a part-time sitting and a bunch of shit, they just laid it on. They just said no, we don't have anything within that category, so we're putting you on a medical layoff. I said ah fuck it. I'll collect ninety-five percent of my pay, who gives a shit you know. Not ninety-five percent, but I think at that time it was like a couple hundred bucks a week or something. I didn't give a fuck. As time went on, I mean, I started approaching ten months, and I was told they had no work, that I better file for social security. How old was I then? Thirty-five years old. And I'm thinking to myself, hey wait a fucking minute, these guys are blowing me right out the door. I mean it was that serious. This is getting serious. So I said I better get down to social security. So I went through social

security and I filed my papers, and they told me that I would probably end up with a couple hundred bucks a month and that would be it. And I'm thinking, holy fuck! I can't afford you know...

Q The rest of your life?

A At that time, I still had at the house and I said I can't do it you know. You know, nobody in this day in age, that's ridiculous.

Q You had worked plenty of jobs at the truck plant and a lot of jobs.

A You know I'm a qualified hi-lo driver for 'em. Like I said, being in there... See the rules apply sometime, and that's what I'm saying about the union. The union should of stepped in and helped me okay? They didn't. To the contrare, everybody turned their heads. It's Wilkens don't you know. Just butt out, nobody. I went to the local and started out there. From the local I went to the region. From the region, I called the international. All of 'em said take the retirement. Take the retirement, are you fucking crazy? Two hundred dollars a month, what the fuck am I gonna do with that? You know, I got kids still in school. That was there advice. So ah, I said no this is bullshit. After exhausting that avenue, I said okay, I'll go to a congressman. So I went to congressman Ford's office. They said yea, they'll help me, okay. The steered me back to the V.A. The V.A. told me that there was nothing that they could do that that was a labor problem. So it was just a vicious circle everybody passing the buck, nobody wanted to do anything. I think it was in November, no, it was in October that... Finally I said, I better get my ass back down to the V.A. to see if they could do anything. Again, I was told

that there was nothing that they could do. Congressman Ford's office says that it's in the hands of the V.A.. It's just a big shove off is all it was. As they come the back door over there at the V.A. okay, across the street is the federal court house. I said wait a minute, maybe okay I'll go over here and talk to somebody from the U.S. Labor Department. Maybe there's somebody in there that can do something for me. So I went in there, and I went up to the Labor Department and they, they asked a few questions, and I said yea, yea, yea, I qualified, answered 'em all right. So I could take a walk down to this door. I got to that door, and it was the Veteran's Affairs Office okay. And they asked me if I was a Vietnam Veteran and I said yes. Are you a disabled Vietnam Veteran? Yes. I showed 'em my cards and shit. Okay, go down to this office. So I went down there, and there was a guy down there named Doug Patterson, a black guy, probably in his early fifties and shit. I told him what the problem was, and he said yes, that they would take the case on. That under some law that was passed in 71 that as a disabled Vietnam Veteran that I had legal rights to rehabilitation and job placement and had priority. And I told him, I said well nobody ever...

Q That's how Benny Gregory got his job? Right? Isn't that how Benny got his job?

A Right, but that was years ago, and I just never paid attention.

Q He came back from Nam...

A See I never complained though. I just.... And so ah, I filled out a complaint with them, and it went to Chicago the regional offices in

Chicago. And in 30 days they... within 30 days he called me up. He said that he sent a telegram to the labor relations staff at Wayne Assembly Plant. That I should be hearing from them. As soon as he hung up, labor relations called me from the Wayne Assembly Plant and told me that they didn't think I got a fair shake when I come home, that they were willing to try and place me. And I said ain't this a bitch. The following day, I had to report to Ford, but I also got a letter in the mail from this regional office in Chicago stating that if they didn't put me to work, they were going to fine them a thousand dollars a day for everyday that I hadn't worked, and for everyday that I wouldn't work. And also, they would like to get in there to examine... I was personally told this, they would like to examine all the veterans in there, then when they got through that, they would examine all the black employees, then they would examine all the female employees, then they would examine all the black female employees, they said they could tie 'em up for years okay and they didn't want that. So...

Q You got your job?

A Ford says, we don't think you got a fair shake. I thought you mother fuckers. Then, as I walked in the door, there are labor reps up there, we fought for you Vic and got this. No you didn't you lying mother fucker, what you... You was informed by this company that I had to be placed, now your scrambling to see what the fuck you can do that's all.

Q By the agency and the government?

A Right. No I'm talking about the union okay.

Q Oh, you mean not the labor reps, you mean the union reps were patting you on the back.

A Right. Well everybody was patting me on the back saying we didn't know, we didn't know. I said you didn't fucking bother to ask. I said beyond that though, I says hey, at that time what did I have, eleven or twelve seniority or some shit like that. I said that alone I said I should be, you know, you can give me a fucking job doing something. But anyway, I just said fuck it. Then I starting questioning what kind of job is this anyway. Then that's how I got involved with this computer. Actually, they come patting me on the back see, and old dumb ass Vic if he can't handle these computers well fuck it, we tried. Well, I managed to succeed with my one cylinder brain. And ah quite to their amazement and my own.

Q Were you amazed?

A I'm was so amazed that the speed that I picked it up, I don't know.

Q Why are you amazed? You didn't think you could do it?

A Fuck no. I was just like those other guys, shit I'm intimidated to use a computer, fuck I don't want nothing to do with that. So I was amazed at myself that the... my memory retention. That's all the fuck it is, just remembering you know.

Q Which...

A What your doing, what program you got and all that shit yea. So that's how I ended up with that job.

Q Did you have training?

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A Yes, they sent me to division. Because see, now that's...

Q Ford World Headquarters Division?

A Ford World Headquarters Division. I went down there for three weeks. Rode down there everyday in the Mark VII. Yea, they took me down there and they told me I had to put this on and I told 'em fuck, fuck you. We go there the best way and I'll take the bus and meet you there. But ah, I went down there, and what it was, it was this program being set up to computerize their material handling system. Prior to what we are doing now, it was all done manually by these people, by hand.

Q Is that the same as checkers?

A Checkers are still there. They have to manually make sure that it's... Physically check that shit that it's out there right.

Q You deal with all of the paperwork?

A All the paperwork.

Q Okay, so from looking at your job where do a lot of the parts come from? Has there been a change? You have been doing the job how long now?

A Oh sure. With this system, this is the third year now.

Q You've been working this job three years?

A Three years now.

Q Working lots of overtime?

A Shit, last year I made fifty-two thousand dollars, and I'm one of the low-paid ones. It's disgusting.

Q How many hours, your talking serious hours, your not just talking

about eight hours a day.

A I'm talking a lot of hours. I'm talking about coming in there on Sunday afternoons to make sure that the paperwork was in there. I got caught up in this that it's my job. I've always been conscientious of the work I do. And understanding more and more each day what this system was about, I started understanding that this shit has to be in there, if it's not in there, then they can't get to it. Now...

Q They meaning the workers and the foreman?

A The workers, the foreman, everybody involved, the vendors, everybody, well if it's not there it gets big fucking searches on, where is it at you know, while your sitting on it down in that back room listening to the radio. So ah...

Q Do you like the job?

A There's no challenge to it anymore. Anything that I... you know how I am, if there's a challenge to it, I really get gung ho on it. But the challenge has worn off, any moron could do it, I could train a monkey to do the job. It's the same fucking thing you know. It's tedious, repetitious over and over and over again. The only difference is, there's no physical labor, it's a little bit of a mental challenge at first to learn and understand what's going on. After that, it's just, it's work. It's just a job, tedious fucking work that has to be done. The sad part is, it's eliminated... Like I said earlier, it's ghost city up there.

Q Where are the parts from?

A Oh christ, from Japan, Brazil, Mexico, all over the United States,

different stamping plants, forging plants, stuff from the plants that Fords owns. In this area, in the Detroit area, god I think every other building is a supplier to one of the big three.

Q Do you find more parts coming from overseas that you can give examples of. Like I know in the truck plant the master cylinder now comes from Japan.

A Shit probably the whole fucking truck is from Japan. Well, I can tell you this, which was funny, when that Escort was first introduced, it was the... the P.R. people put it out as the world car. Well it was a world car alright, because the fucking parts come from all over the world. It's assembled in the United States, the difference between the truck plant and, I don't know if you know this or not, ours is a federal trade zone. Okay, now what that is, remember when years ago these fucking guys wanted a couple screws to tighten up a door or something, they would walk out with a couple of screws, nobody would say nothing. Okay, you could pick them up, fuck, they waste more on the floor than they do, and nobody would say anything. You get caught walking out the doors of the Wayne Assembly Plant, you have committed a federal crime because it's a federal trade zone. We have, who's them assholes over there at the bridge?

Q Customs.

A We have U.S. Customs officers walking around the plant. Oh yea, the badges on and all that shit. You get caught stealing any fucking thing.

Q Because there are so many parts from other places?

A Because they're not taxed until it is assembled and rolled out. Okay so it's a free trade zone, okay, when it's put together and comes out, then they're taxed. And until then, they got all these custom's people around, and that's what it is. The whole transaxle assemblies are coming from Japan.

Q What is a transaxle?

A Transaxle is on a front-wheel drive automobile, it's all one piece. The transmission...

Q The front-end technology is coming from Japan?

A From Japan. Oh yea, it's all out of Japan. The wiring which I forgot which plant they used to... I think they used to make them in California, but they started shipping the shit down to Mexico about four or five years ago, just all scrap shit coming out. Hey what do you expect, the workers get a buck a hour, buck and a half a hour. What, they just went on strike down there, for what? a thirty cent raise. So all the wiring looms are what control all the electric currents and all that shit through the entire vehicle. So you got that. Brazil... What parts are coming out of Brazil, oh shit. Ah christ they even get parts from Argentina.

Q What do you think about all the guys and yourself wearing the buy american t-shirts, buy what you build bumper stickers, and then they are building stuff made in...

A I think it's a joke actually. I can understand their feelings and how they relate... well I'll give you a real quick something to relate that to that I could relate to real easy. When I was first sent from

the Michigan Truck Plant over to the car plant, it was against my will, okay, but what choice do I have? I have no skills, I have no education, I have to go where there's work. I went there and the people on the line resented me so bad from taking one of their fellow worker's jobs, that I was the enemy. And I thought Jesus Christ I've given six years to this fucking union, organizing all this shit, for what? And I'm trying to explain to this girl. I mean she vehemently got in my face and told me I was a no good mother fucker for stealing a job and all that shit. And I made really a stupid statement in defense of myself, I just told her I said lady, I work for the Ford Motor Company, I don't work for any particular plant you know, it's a big vast empire. And I think with telling her that, my eyes opened up a little more too because I was always like just localized in one little place. I never realized how big that fucking company is. And I think when I made the statement to her, you know she just looked at, and then I think something went off in my head too. I said Jesus Christ I do work for this company. You know, and ah, then I also realized too some of the stuff that I used to preach about we are all one, it really hit me in the ass, that yea, I am part of this, I really am part of this. And that, none of 'em no how vulnerable they really are. Your just a... you're nothing there. You have no, as far as security there's no fucking thing as security, it's just a god damn job.

Q Let's take a big step back to when you were hired in and then we will go further back to when you were a little tot. We want to hear some

stories about your ma, and about Missouri. When you were coming up, where were you raised and what were some of things you did as a kid?

A Well I'll take it back. My mother and father are from the State of Missouri. My father was a sharecropper okay. I don't know if you know what that is or not. Very hard times back in the early forties, late thirties. Just recovering from the depression that had hit the entire country, and then, there was nothing there. It's cotton farms and that's it. My dad was a sharecropper. And my mother is the daughter of a sharecropper. Never had a fucking pot to piss in or a window to throw it out okay. And I mean that literally. They, I had, at that time, there were five children in the family okay. Immediately after the war there was a big boom on, and where else to come to Michigan where there's plenty of work here. All the auto factories were back in swing and everything was just going full tilt. As a matter of fact, they moved here during the war because there was work here for folks. And so ah, my dad consequently had worked for the Ford Motor Company for a little while at the Willow Run Bommer Plant. I guess, I don't know because I've never asked my mother, but I just kind of surmised that my dad being a farmer the way he was, just couldn't hack it, working inside like that. So he quit there and worked in Detroit here for the Detroit Harbors, the boatyard. And ah, well my mom, eventually she had nine children, I am the eighth of nine. And ah, my dad died in December of 1948, as a matter of fact Christmas Eve in 48 and my younger brother was born in January of 49 a month later. My dad died of a coronary seizure at the yards over

there. There was a lot of controversy over that. He was alive and they were bringing him home, and the fella's said you know he was just setting there drinking, and then he said yea I'm alright, and they left him sitting in the back seat of the car and he died. If they would of brought him home, maybe he would be alive today. But ah...

Q When were you born?

A I was born in 1947. I was born in February of 47. And ah, needless to say in those years, like I said we didn't have nothing anyway, and my mom was left with nine kids to raise and take care, and she did it. Worked very hard. My mother worked for almost thirty years for the Board of Education. She took the only skill she had, one was with kids, and the other was cooking. So my mother worked for almost thirty years for Westwood Board of Education as a cook. Started out as a baker's assistant, and then, ended up after thirty years of being in charge of a couple of schools and being the head cook. And I think when she retired she was making a hundred and thirty dollars every two weeks, that was in 76. Mom raised nine kids on I think paychecks that were forty dollars every two weeks. We never had, never would accept General Assistance, she always was too proud, and insisted that she was able to work and take care of us. And so, that's the childhood that I had.

Q What do you remember a Christmas like when you were a little tot?

A Shit.

Q It's a big family, it's not only nine kids, but they're all big in size.

A Well, because of what happened, my dad dying, I hate holidays. As a matter of fact, my brothers all... There's nobody, it's just nobody, there's no joy in mudville at Christmas time. So consequently, the generation of my children, and my brother's children all of us... it's... holidays are just a mother fucker. And ah, anyway, where were we at?

Q You were telling about your mom raising...

A That was... anybody that works with the school system, there's all some recess right? So there's nothing in the summer time. So mom had to save very hard, work very hard. Mother did laundry. We planted gardens in the yard and all that shit, and that's how we survived. We were, at the time, my mother and father moved up here, ah, you move where your money can take you, what money you have. Mother and dad bought a house. Saved and paid eight hundred dollars for that house. There was no plumbing, one light bulb in it, okay? And she raised nine kids in that house. There was still no adequate plumbing in that house when they tore it down in 1978. But managed to raise those kids in that house.

Q Did you think you were poor when you were growing up?

A No. Never did think I was poor. As a matter of fact, I... today this day, I look back Rick, and I try to figure out in the fuck she did it. To this day, I don't know how. My mother is still alive. She is seventy-five years old, has rheumatoid arthritis from her spine to her ankles. She is just literally bowed and crippled, and still gets around probably better than I do.

Q Great spirit?

A She has a spirit that is unbelievable. My mom is like a rock. She is like a fucking rock. As a matter of fact, my nephew just passed away at thirty-five, in November. And my mom, we all, we know that it hit her hard, but she just say well, just because somebody lays down and dies, doesn't mean we have to. That's it in a nutshell. Anyway, I was raised in the city of Inkster, which is predominately black. I don't know how it was years ago, I don't remember years ago. It's always been black since... As I started to say on the other side, I read somewhere that the City of Inkster, I don't know if it's true or not, but the City of Inkster has always been there, but years ago at the Rouge complex, Henry Ford when he introduced a five dollar work day, had gone down south and brought back a lot of black workers, and had located them in the City of Inkster. I don't know if it's true or not, I read it. I don't know how true it is. He set up a store down there and promised the woman sewing machines, and did give 'em sewing machines, and give those guys five bucks a day. But you have Dearborn, okay, in that book it says that Dearborn is for the dear, okay the dear at heart okay, and Inkster is, well the ink, the black okay. From where we are at in Missouri anyway is... there's probably more poverty there. Poverty doesn't know any color.

Q In Missouri?

A In Missouri. You hear people talk about the south okay, about the prejudice and all that shit. And the area that we're from I guess it's different. I guess that there's all different colors down there.

Q Where in Missouri?

A It's in the boothill. In the State of Missouri, if you look at a map it's got like a boothill way down in the corner. It's Dunklin County, Missouri.

Q Dunklin?

A Dunklin County.

Q How do you spell it?

A Dunklin County. Nothing's there, except poor people trying to scrape the fucking dirt to get something going, that's it. So as a kid growing up, I was not aware of any fucking changes going on in the world. All I knew is that I was a kid. And directly across the street from me all these new homes, really nice houses. Now I look at it and it's just a little fucking cracker box. But at that time, brand new homes being built and black folks moving there. We... there were three white families on our street, all of us just nothing, just nothing. And these folks had everything you know. I always related to that if there was a father in the house that he could work and provide. Strange okay. That's what I always figured you know.

Q Because that's what you didn't have?

A Right. There was nobody, there was just my mother. Watched a lot of shit go on. And anyway I started paying social security at ten years old.

Q Ten years old?

A Ten years old.

Q What was your first job?

A I worked for a black fella named Bill Page in the City of Inkster who owned a gas station. My job, as a kid, it was approximately five blocks away from the house. I just hung out there every day. Finally, the guy said you gonna work, or what are you gonna do. I said are you giving me job? Yea. I was paid four bucks a week okay? Then my mother come down and had said something to him, I don't know what. I think what she said was that if your gonna work the boy, pay his you know. Because it was so important for her to pay that tax because of my dad and her being part of it when it was instituted my the government. She said if you're gonna work 'em pay his you know... so I started pay social security when I was ten years old. So that was he did, he boosted my pay to five bucks a week and took a dollar. But I... shit ten years old. Christ.

Q What did you do?

A I changed tires. I'd jack the cars up and change tires and pump gas. Did oil changes. Ten years old.

Q Were you a big kid then?

A Not really. I was probably...

Q Because all the kids in the family are over six feet right.

A Around ten years old, I was probably around five-seven, or five-eight somewhere in there.

Q What about school when you were ten years old? What do you remember about school? Did you go to school and then went to work after?

A Yea, during the fall when school started I'd go to school and get out of school and on the way home from school I would just stop at the gas

station. I worked there until I was fifteen years old.

Q The same gas station? What kind of guy was Mr. Page?

A Bill Page was from Mississippi. Him and his wife, Annie, his wife Annie was his second wife. Don't know much about his first family, but his second family, he had two children. There was Sandra and Dennis that were his children from that marriage. And ah, Annie... Now in retrospect, I look back, Page must have been alot older than her okay. But he never appeared to be old you know.

Q When you're a little kid you don't know age.

A He was a hustler, he had the gas station, he played the harmonica, painted cars. Did anything with the cars you could think of you know. I was quite impressed with that you know. I thought the guy was a genius you know. I was impressed. Bill would shit if the student become the teacher. Well, I thought that I was smarter than he was at fifteen, and at fifteen I was still working for five fucking dollars a week. The mother fucker, he wouldn't give me no more money. At that point, see I was well fuck, I was doing anything with an automobile you could think of, trans... you know, anything.

Q What does that mean anything? What did you do?

A I was rebuilding motors, I was...

Q People that will read this don't know anything about cars.

A Well at the age of fifteen, I progressed from a ten year old kid to just, and I don't know where I got the knowledge from I just did it. It just come to me. From draining the oil out and changing filters and putting oil back in and ah, that I progressed my way up by

watching to learning how to do a tune-up on a car. And ah, from then you know it's what the drive trains were, changing clutches and just different things, rebuilding transmissions and shit. I was doing this by the age of fifteen. And I would still go to school. Well, at fifteen, I got the guts up, I said I wanted a raise. And his words were that you're too big for me to take care of now, go find yourself a job that's gonna pay you that forty dollars a week that you want. I look back, I was probably making him a hell of a lot more than forty dollars a week. Well, I never thought that Page exploited me because I always thought he was good to me you know. I never really thought about it you know. But then, at that point it pissed me off that he wouldn't give me a... all I wanted was a thirty-five dollar a week raise. But I would take that money and give it to my mother. Anyhow, I got mad and told him I quit. I mean I got a thing about when I get pissed off, I stay pissed off for a long time. Well, I went to school and at sixteen years old. Oh shit I used to go. There's a black night club, very famous over here in Detroit, not Baker's (?), it's the other that's ah. At that age, I used to go down there and watch him perform with a harmonica and stuff, and I'm the only white person in the place you know. So I was never afraid. I never knew that fear I another race. Never experienced that in my life okay. Quite the contraire I was always accepted. And I guess, you know I look back and it's because of where I grew you know. But we had our differences and I told him I wanted that raise and he wouldn't give me that raise. So I said okay. And I think what he was telling me that I was just

getting up I had to find some work. Fifteen fucking years old okay by this time. And I continued to go to school. I didn't like school. I guess I was a trouble, you know, I hated school. I didn't like the fucking teachers, I'd fight with the teachers. I'd skip school, I'd do all kinds of rotten shit. I never did any crime okay, I wasn't that type of person. I just ah, just felt trapped okay. I just wanted to be out in the world. When I think about it now, fuck you been working since you were ten years old, I guess it would be what, fucking borking sitting in a classroom you know. I just couldn't relate to any of the kids. Never played any sports. Just...

Q What did you do? What did you and your friends do when you were in high school?

A Oh shit man, back then it was... the big fucking thing was drinking. Shit man, we would drink beer and get all fucked up on a bottle of beer you know. Hang out on the streets until midnight you know. Just playing kick the can and fucking off and doing nothing. Girls weren't on my mind, nothing. Just bullshitting around that's all. It's a little different today. The kids at fifteen, sixteen years old will kill your ass.

Q What's the difference. We went to see Tin Man. Did you see the movie Tin Man? It's a fantastic film about...

A The ripoff artist.

Q The aluminum siding. But it's much more the culture of these hard working guys trying to do a hustle and trying to make some money.

A They made money on that shit.

Q And how they... you know they have these terrible relationships. This guy had a terrible relationship with his wife, but he doesn't beat her physically. He doesn't get drunk, he doesn't do coke. In fact, after hanging out and having a terrible scene at work for a few days, he comes home and takes orange juice out of the refrigerator. You know, he just had a drink of orange juice. Whereas now, if you had that scene, you know, it would be a whole bottle of scotch, or it would be some coke or something. When you say they would kill you now, why do you say it was different, you grew up in tough time?

A We'd get into fights and shit you know. Fuck it was just who was the toughest kid you know. And there was always one in every neighborhood okay. And in our neighborhood it was a guy named Billy Douglas. Well fuck, he was like a bull you know. I'd try. I'd try to whip his ass man, he'd make mince meat out of me every fucking time I'd turn around okay. But you know, that was my buddy. You know there was no malice in your heart to kill anybody. Christ you never even thought of killing anybody. Now, these kids today, I don't know what we've done to 'em. And I say we, because we're responsible for these kids now. Christ the biggest thing you know, I guess when I was doing that shit man, I just wanted to be out in the streets. You know I always felt that that was where everything was at you know. Even though there wasn't shit out there you'd find yourself standing on the street corner you know just sitting shucking and jiving with somebody. You know that was the big extent you know, oh it's eleven o'clock got to go. It's just like the Bill Cosby, it's eleven o'clock, I got to go

home you know, and that was it you know. At that age and now, I mean honest to god you see a kid today fifteen years old, and not all kids are this way, I'm not saying that, probably back when I was sixteen years old, the badest asses around come out of southwest Detroit okay. And there was a gang of 'em there. Of course we always thought the inner city kids were tough and all that shit. Well they were no different than us. They were just a little more close knit than we were.

Q They were white and Chicano kids?

A Yea. You know, just kids. Well they would drive out here into... which was the suburbs, I didn't know a fucking suburb back then. They would drive way out here to fuck with us you know. And everybody man, it was just. Oh shit the fights I... down into the park. And I guess you would call 'em a rumble okay, and that was it. But it was just, it was more running for your fucking life thinking somebody's gonna cut your head off, than it was anything. You might, now I'm talking fifteen and sixteen years old.

Q This was around 1963, 1964.

A Yea. Well just a little... the times just before Kennedy was killed okay. I mean the big event was to go down into the park with a jug of fucking Mogan David, drink that till you got pukey fucking drunk, blow your groceries all over the place, at eleven o'clock trying to find your fucking way through the park and walk maybe ten, fifteen blocks back to your house. There was virtually no... I mean there was no crime like there is now. I mean you could do shit like that you

know. And nobody would fuck with you, you know. Ah... or if it was just the fact that I was considered one of the bad asses from the other side of the tracks you know, I don't know you know. But I tend to think that the crime just wasn't... people just wasn't...

Q How many friends did you have that were killed when you were a kid?

A Oh, well now when I got into the teen years now, it got into different because at that time you were getting into the sixties. Drugs come out in the sixties you know. To be honest with you, at sixteen my goal was man you got to have some money you know. And I wasn't a crook okay. You got to work. So I hired in... I went over to the Pepsi-Cola Company, they built a bottling plant out there off of Beech Daly. I went over there, lied to them, told them I was seventeen. I got a job. And ah, I worked for them, oh Christ, four or five years. How old was I? Yea, I worked longer than that. I worked for them for about seven years.

Q Sixteen to twenty-two?

A I was twenty-two years old.

Q When you went to Nam?

A I was twenty-three when I went to Nam.

Q Really?

A Yea. I was an old man when I went to Nam. I worked for them, made damn good money, but I didn't know it. Because what had happened, our society is so fucked up, and I was so stupid and naive, even though my mother raised us, I didn't know shit. Now a kid at sixteen years old has probably been with everybody and there fucking brother, and far as

sleeping with 'em okay. I was sixteen years old and had never even kissed a girl okay. You know, I look at my sons now, and you know Stimey's(?) the same damn way, his mind is on basketball and just playing it. And ah, he's nineteen okay. I mean, I guess that's an oddity, it's a rarity I guess I don't know.

Q You started to publicize part of what's going on?

A What had happened with me was, and I can say this now because I've been in therapy for fucking fifteen years to figure it out. I met a girl up on Michigan Avenue who worked in the restaurant. She was three years older than myself. I was sixteen, she was nineteen. And ah, one thing led to another and I had sex with her and she was pregnant. And I believed and was raised that this is your child you take... you made your bed, you lay in it that's what it amounted to. You did it, it's your responsibility. So at sixteen, I was a father. At the age of sixteen. Fuck, and that's when I went to work for the Pepsi-Cola Company, I was making... At that time I think I was... this was in the early sixties, this was in sixty-four right? I was making two hundred fifty dollars a week with them. Because I was working with a guy, Tom Moody, nice guy, who later worked with Jimmy Hoffa as his body guard. And ah, one thing led to another, I was given a job as a salesman. Where did they give me a job at, Southwest Detroit, all the blacks, no white guys would go there. It didn't bother me, it was just a fucking job you know. I never... again, I wasn't even thinking this is black or white or anything, this is just a fucking job. It was a very lucrative business over there. You

know, I'd leave work from my mother's house, now I was still living at my mother's house, I'd walk to work at the Pepsi-Cola Company, and... 'cause I didn't have no money. I'm making all this fucking money, but I didn't have no money because at the end of the week I would give these checks to the mother of my child. I didn't keep a fucking penny.

Q You weren't married yet?

A No. I got married when I was eighteen. Never kept a fucking penny. I walked to work, drove the god damn trucks all day long. Worked my ass off till three thirty in the afternoon, bring it back, do my count out, give 'em the money. At four o'clock, I'd walk down the railroad tracks from the Pepsi Cola Company to John Daly to Pioneer Detroit, which was a metal fabricating shop. And I'd work in there until midnight, go home, sleep, start it all over again. I did that for two years and never kept a fucking penny. What a fucking asshole, no shit. What an asshole. My mother, here's my mother, whom gave so much to me that I wasn't even thinking about her. Those were some years that you know, just for that hard work, I could have helped her life okay, but I didn't. The guilt, the sin, you know the whole fucking shit. And the money then, the woman that I was... hey man I was getting laid, that had to be love man. It wasn't shit, it was just sex, and I was too fucking dumb to know it. But I always considered myself to be an honorable person so I you know, this shit went on for two fucking years. I figured well, I guess we better get married. On the day that I got married Rick, her mother and father

drove her to Detroit at the Federal Court House, I took a bus from Inkster, met them at the fucking court house, got married, they left, I got back on the bus and went back home.

Q You didn't go live together or done nothing?

A No.

Q Then you had two more kids with Delores?

A Had two more children after that, but took place after that. I started putting two and two together. I said now wait a fucking minute, I'm making the money, you know, I don't even have a fucking shirt to wear okay. And my mother, because my mother harping on me, she said you're a damn fool. But she never would tell me not to do it though. You're a damn fool. Because my mother was raised, you're a man you're... she keeps telling me you're a damn fool you know. And I would say what. But she would never tell me anything.

Q She wouldn't tell you what to do. After calling you a fool...

A This big fucking mystery of the universe... tell me shit, what am I doing? And nobody would say anything you know. I started piecing this shit together. Now let me remind you now, this girl is running around in a brand new car, they're living in the City of Taylor. That's where all the rick people are right?

Q Taylor was rich?

A Yea in my mind.

Q Compared to Inkster.

A Fuck, where I lived at, you saw where I lived at. Yea fuck if I walked in your house and there was carpet and paint on the walls, man

I was impressed you know. Because I had grown up the way I did, I had the mentality that I was a nobody. And ah, this shit just went on you know.

Q I don't really need to talk about Delores. You had three children.

A Three children. My first child was born deaf and for christ sakes I created an imperfect child and the guilt that comes with that is why I did what I did. I... to this day, I don't know where that... if it was on my side or where it come from. I just pieced things together, I figured well god damn it, if I'm doing the work, I should at least benefit some of this shit. And I realized at that time, you know, the brain starts clicking I'm still living at my mother house. My mother's still feeding me, I'm doing nothing to help her. I said this shit ain't right you know. I guess it's time to go you know. So I just told her, I said either we find a place to live together, or else. Unfortunately the marriage only... I only lived with her for less than three years. And out of that come three children okay. Legally, I was married to her for seven years. But I only lived with her for three years. During our marriage, part of the seven years, is when I discovered that this... my mind just started opening up to too much shit you know. I, I, I, first I figured I was entitled to this, I worked for this shit. And with that mentality, I'm entitled to a lot more you know. I always liked to drink... Well let's put it this way, I always liked to bullshit because drinking was having a good time and I always associated I was entitled to a fucking good time you know. Well, one of the first things I ever bought myself, was a

motorcycle. Never bought a car, I bought a fucking motorcycle. An old Harley Davison. And back then, I was always a good mechanic okay. So everybody used to come to me and have me work on there fucking bikes, and these guys from the Hiway Men motorcycle club. I started running with a bike club okay. A lot of fun, these were guys my own age... it was the same as when I was a kid, out there shucking and jiving you know, just having a good fucking time. I don't think of hurting anybody you know. Well these guys were some serious criminals you know. I mean these fuckers would shoot you in a minute you know. And I thought fuck this you know. But first one thing led to another, I broke away from those guys and just like with Page, okay you mother fuckers if I can't get what I want here, I'll start my own club, which I did. Now there's a group running around on the other side of the town and they're still in existence called the Scorpions. They're running around over there. Me and my brother started that. And ah, well...

Q What is your best memory of being in a motorcycle gang?

A You know what I think the best part was, the since of accomplishment that I was able to organize something and do something. I finally did something. It wasn't much, and I regret doing it to this day, that look what I've done. I mean your talking guys now that... That shit over those few years, I mean the time really started flying for me. That's when LSD was on the fucking streets and a lot of the chemicals and the hippies in Ann Arbor, you know. I didn't even know what a fucking hippy was okay. I just didn't know what it was you know. I'm

not naive, I just not aware of shit that goes on around me, 'cause I'm living in my own little world you know. But I was introduced to some freaks out there in Ann Arbor. And at the same time they had this shit going on in Detroit with Plum Street you know. That was Detroit's...

Q Greenwich Village?

A Yea, more or less, yea. Leather shops and candle shops, and these you now flipped out people running around there. Well fuck, that was open game for us you know. We'd go to Ann Arbor and sell these kids drugs out there and I'd you know. It's just acid, fuck, I'd take it with 'em it didn't make no difference you know. I'd get all fucked up, wiggled out and shit, and unfortunately I was still working for the Pepsi-Cola Company. And ah, I was twenty-two years old okay, and the marriage wasn't shit you know. Fuck I didn't even consider myself married, I never entered into as an adult, didn't know what an adult relationship was okay...

Q Twenty-two, this was 1969?

A Well, in 1968 okay, we were setting at this house over in Dearborn. You know, fuck it just got to where every night all I did was sit around smoking drugs and drinking beer and fucking around with somebody's woman you know. I never got to do it before, so I'm gonna make up for lost time. And I was, I was picked the highest dude you ever saw in the truck plant right. I don't know. Think back, who was always high. Wine, you Wine, always fucked up right. Wine wasn't shit, 'cause I was like that all... I would come out the fucking door,

I couldn't even stand up right. And I'm sitting there one night and what happened was, my brother, his bike had broke down and ah, he come down the street. He bust in the door, and all I remember is some mother fucker pulled a gun on me. I said gun fuck. I went out the door, I was going to avenge my younger brother right? Needless to say my brother didn't tell me he'd gone down there and threw a fucking brick through their window. So I walked down there in a drunken haze and stepped on their property, and all I remember is somebody cracked me across my head. Well when I woke up, Dearborn Heights Police had me handcuffed to a fucking bumper of a car right. Told me not to move, wacked me a couple of more times across the head. And I'm sitting there screaming that I wanted my fucking rights and all this shit. And I didn't know that my brother and Ray and all those guys had gone in the house and beat the shit out of everybody in the house okay. And I was the only one there. They had me. I had trespassed onto their private property. Well, I lost my fucking job from Pepsi over that shit. I was locked up in jail. And ah, Tom Moody tried to get me out of there. You know they put a fifty-five thousand dollar bond on me. We didn't have five thousand dollars, are you shitting me to put up ten percent. So that's when I copped a plea at that time, there was something called a Michigan Youth Act for people under the age of twenty-five. I promised to go into the armed services. I didn't know there was a fucking Vietnam. All this time that fucking shit's going on, I did not know it was in Vietnam.

Q In 1968?

A Yea. In 1968 I was...

Q It was either jail or the service. I would either have to face a jury by trial on felonious assault with intent to kill which carries two to five years. Just over getting hit in the head you know. I was just at the right place at the wrong time. And ah, I said yea, fuck I'll do anything get me out of this god damm place. I mean, I'm sitting up there on murderer's row you know. I thought shit, let me out of this place. So I got out of it, I copped a plea and I ah, they carried me there to the recruiter's office over there at Fort Wayne. You know the one on Fort Street, or Jefferson.

Q You were in the service from when to when?

A Well, I was actually in Vietnam sixty-nine and seventy. But it overlaps year, you had a twelve-month tour. I didn't finish my tour, because I got my... I was shot through the hip with a fifty caliber. I fell and we had linked up with the first calv. That's mechanized equipment, it was a tank. Tank drove up.

Q Your own tank?

A One of ours, yea. That's own I survived. Finally got out of there.

Q What's the hardest memory you have about Nam?

A The hardest?

Q Yea.

A Well, I don't know if that's important to the book or not.

Q Well what is important is what Nam meant to you. It doesn't have to be the hardest.

A Believe it or not, when I went there, I thought well this is my hour

of redemption. If I can make good hear, I've cleared any wrong that I've done. I really believe that. How fucking naive I was, I mean when you look back at now, how fucking naive, stupid. To this day, I don't... when I come back, I spent time at the Fort Hood Texas Rehabilitation learning how to walk and shit. When I got out of the service, I was... This relationship, I have to go back, I had actually reinlisted for six more years. Just... I was sent a Dear John letter over there okay, meaning that ah, this woman, and the only reason... you see some of the reasons were that I went there I said, get all this shit behind me, get my record clean and all that shit, and maybe I can make this marriage work. Well while I was there, I was sent a Dear John letter that shit ain't gonna work blah, blah, blah. My fucking mind snapped Jack. I mean I'm gonna fucking kill you when I get my hands on your ass. That urge was so great in me that I went... we used to come back in out of the fields and go to a stand on. Stand on was a realivly secure area. And they also had a recruiter there. If you wanted to change your job, you want to get out these... I was a combat soldier, you know I wasn't no fucking clerk or nothing I was in combat. Most guys went back and reinlisted to get the fuck out of line of fire, they didn't want to be there. So they would take the truck driving jobs or whatever. I went back and reinlisted for six more fucking years just to get thirty days leave of absence. I'll come back to this same fucking area, the same job, just give me thirty days leave of absence. They give it to me. I was put on a fucking plane, come home, I went to my mother's house. Sit there

for two days, in silence, freaked my mother and them out okay. They didn't know what the fuck to do. If they talked to me, I just... Waiting, my ex-wife, I called her from Fort Louis, Washington, told her I was coming in. Her response was you should of told me, I have plans to go to Tennessee with my father okay. No problem, I'll wait. I went to Metro Airport, somebody spit in my fucking face out there and I kicked their fucking ass. 'Cause I had my uniform on. When I come through the airport, I got into a cab and wen to my mother's house and I sat there for two days, and my ex-wife pulled up, with the children in the car, and I didn't even ask no questions. I went out there and yanked her out of the car and beat the living shit right out of her, all over the fucking road, just kicked her ass up and down the street and everything. My mother had called the police on the me. The police in term called the military police from Sulfrige Air Force Base and they come out and busted me. I didn't even get my fucking thirty days. I was taken back by military police, put back to Kentucky, Kentucky back on out.

Q When you were in Nam, you were a Raider?

A Yea, I was with the 75th.

Q Just give me a real brief thing, it doesn't have to be a big thing?

A Well again, money being a motivator, I never paid attention to what the fuck I was doing. I just kept volunteering and volunteering. Before I left the United States I was an Airborne Raider. Now they're called Flight Assault Teams and shit they got different names for them. Some people might relate to 'em as a Paratrooper. But I was

with the 75th Infantry I went out as a Long Ranger Constance Patrolman. I just... it was just another job. I just did my job.

Q Whey you came out in 19 what year?

A I was released December 24, 1970.

Q When did you hire in at the truck plant?

A One year later. December 9, 1971. I was discharged from the United States Army on...

Q You hired in two days after me?

A You got more seniority than me.

Q Two days. Let's go back to the plant here. How did you end up at the truck plant?

A Twenty-five years after my dad died, I was released. It's ironic you know. And on Christmas Eve, I was by myself again. Nobody there to greet me, nothing. I come back, I apologized to my wife for what I had done. Told her I didn't know why I did it, which I did I was very angry okay, but I lied I said that I didn't know why I did it. I had a lot of anger in me that I didn't even know where that anger was coming from. But I know now. I took it out on a lot people for a long time after that. And a year later, I still was involved in this relationship. Die hard fucker, I just, at that point, I said no the responsibility is mine, I have to make this work. It wasn't working man, I got a job shortly after I got out of the service for the C & O Railroad as a what they call a clerk. Some type of clerk, I checked the fuel in these refrigeration cars that come over to Dearborn yards close to the Rouge Plant you know. Checking that, I ended up having

to drive back and forth to a place called Bellevue, Ohio. I did this shit for a year and I was making no money at all. Then, in the meantime, this fucking marriage is just going to shit, right down the tubes. You know I... this is nuts. So I got a job at the Ford Motor Company right. I was put on the afternoon shift. It was quite an experience because I had never worked inside like that, never. Never man, when I went in there, it was so fucking crazy, I said ah shit man. I have to do this to survive. But ah...

Q When you hired in at the plant, what were some of the relationships?

A Well the first thing I saw, you know I hadn't been out of the military too long okay. And the place is run in a military fashion. Meaning that there are captains, executive officers, there are actual... Okay, by being a combat soldier there's always officers to take responsibility on paper, but they don't do anything they just... Okay in my eyes as I looked at it, I saw this is nothing but a military organization. Because you got your chain of command right on down to do this dippy fucking line foreman right. Who is nothing more than a guy just like yourself who is never gonna go any place. He doesn't know it, but he's there for the rest of his fucking life right. But he's got an attitude that's he better and all this shit. So I figured well fuck it. I can survive in this. I've survived worse you know.

Q Why did you get involved in the union and the newsletter?

A Because of prior involvement with the Vietnam Veteran's Against War, which is now part of the establishment. I realized at that time, and prior to that, that I was part of the fucking problem that was going

on in the world. I had volunteered more or less to go there and without even questioning anything, I went and did a job against people who didn't even have a chance. You know as far as our weaponry and they just didn't have a chance. They did, in essence they have their freedom from the oppression from the rest of the world now they can grow at their own pace, but at that time, they were fighting a civil war in that country. And I didn't know what those terms were, I didn't know none of that shit. All I knew is that I was there and I did a lot of damage to a lot of people. Not only myself, but you take that by thousands of people that we just destroyed a country. Even though we didn't, there was no ah, like in World War II, there was no signing of agreements with or anything with 'em that we had won. But we destroyed a fucking country. Had our congress ever of declared war on that country, we could of fucking annihilated that country in a matter of hours. But thanks to the rest of the world, there was some sanity okay. Through political struggle, they gained their freedom. But I again, got invovled with the V.A.W. and I knew somewhat of what organizing was and what had to be done and all that shit, and so, when I went to work in the plant I figured well I got to get my shit together here you know. And I saw these guys running around who claimed to be fighting for this guy and that guy and all they were was a popularity contest of who could run their mouths the fastest. Ah fuck I can do that shit, I can shuck and jive with the best of 'em. Fuck I did it too. I was... befriended a few of 'em okay. And again, my personality of growing up were I grew up at, I could relate to

black folks better than I could the white people okay. It was just, ah, I don't know a charisma or something about me that was just attractive. I still get that to this day. I'm constantly questioned, how many black people are in your family? Me. It's just been, and so I was open to that world of politics and I knew what unions were because as a kid when I worked for Pepsi-Cola I knew what the Teamsters were. I told you ah, Jimmy Hoffa, you know this big union figure this awesome man you know. So I knew what it was.

Q Do you think you accomplished anything as a union committee man and then a union bargaining committee man right?

A Yea.

Q Do you think you accomplished anything?

A No.

Q How has the union changed?

A Did I accomplish anything?

Q And how have the issues changed, have you accomplished anything, what did you quit?

A Why did I quit? Because at that time, there was another gangster in the fucking place, Al Brown. This man was no more a union man than Roger Smith okay. He was there solely to benefit for himself and what he could steal. And he had a network of thieves around okay. He's a very corrupt man. He was just a gangster. What I call a gangster. I believe the man would kill you. I really do okay. I believe the man would blow you away. And I say that from the experience of being around people that have done shit like that. And I believe with all

of my heart that that man would of either killed me or killed or some of them guys, so I said fuck it. I was actually afraid of that man, you guys didn't know that. I was afraid of that son of a bitch. But I was damned bound and determined not to let him fuck me over or anybody around me, because I believed in the principles of what we were doing. And I figured well, if I gotta die for causes...

Q What were the principles that you believed in when you got active with the union and the rank and file newsletter?

A Again, relating it back to how I grew up, I always... I still believe to this day, that people in this country, we are a very wealthy country, there's enough wealth to spread around this country so that we could all live good. Now I don't mean we'd all be millionaires, but I mean that we could eliminate you know, health care, education, jobs, work for everybody. Everybody could be productive in this society, okay. And these are fucking things that I believe we should automatically have, but we don't because of the way it's run. The dollar runs everything. And I believe that if I got in there, at least I could help protect what somebody fought for. 'Cause I was a figher and I am a fighter. I didn't know that the shitty fucking games of politics. The dirty mother fuckers that are involved in that shit, that can just eat you alive. I was so god damn naive I didn't even know about that shit. And that's all the fuck there is...

Q Do you think that the union weren't committed or dedicated?

A Not at all. Not at all. Not at all.

Q Do you this it has changed over the fifteen years you have been there?

A What, their attitudes? No, it's the same fucking thing. It's the same fucking thing.

Q Well what has changed in the plant?

A What's changed in the plant? I'll tell you what's changed in the plant, the ah, Ford Motor Company has... they have created what you know as the I.E. or E.I. whatever the fuck it is.

Q Tell me about it and tell me what you think about it, and how it functions in your plant?

A What is it? It's a way of... I'll tell you what it is. It's a way of the union getting in the fucking middle of what the union... it's a way of the company getting in the middle of the fucking union's work, or what the union is supposed to be responsible for. And the union is all these people okay. It's everybody in the plant. And I'm not talking about the elected people they have to patrol or police what we have. They have come up with brilliant fucking idea of let's get the employees involved. It's the same shit in the fucking army Rick. You take a no nothing fucking private out there, and you tell him, you're in charge, this son of a bitch will do everything in his fucking power to get these guys to do something. And it's exactly what they've done. You give these fucking morons this job here, and I'm telling you guys with twenty, twenty-five years seniority eating that shit up like nobody's business.

Q What do they do?

A What do they do? They come in and tell you oh the company, the company took us over here to... on a tour on the Rossenville Plant and

they got a salad bar in the cafeteria. We're gonna fight for that salad bar. Salad bar! I'm serious. I'm serious. They think okay the company give 'em a fucking salad bar. You remember that strike we had over there. We picketed the kitchen. They don't give a fuck, we... how long did we shut that kitchen down, a week, two weeks some shit like that. That didn't even fucking phase 'em, because they're subsidized by the Ford Motor Company. The company comes back and says, well fuck it, give these guys a salad bar. These guys are running around like fucking peacocks, their feathers are out here. They've accomplished something, they got a fucking salad bar. The company's listening to us, and the union didn't get it for us. I'm sitting there thinking, you stupid mother fuckers. You dumb bastards...

Q What do you think it means to the future of the working person?

A What do I think it means for the...

Q This is the new Japanese reaction?

A It actually works you know that.

Q What does it mean?

A Well, not only that, the Swedish have something similar to the Japs and the Japs adapted theirs from the Swedes okay. There were teams that went together and worked on those cars over there, what the Volvo or whatever it is. And the Japs got smarter, they got smart and started watching them, and they... of course that's their whole culture is different than ours okay. They're trying to incorporate that shit on an American basis, the American way. Okay and the

American way is corruption.

Q Say more.

A Because you take... Harry Bennett, you know who Harry Bennett was right?

Q The guy from Ford.

A From Ford Motor Company, fucking goon squad. He told the own man fucking fifty years ago, give these mother fuckers what they want. The old man no, he wouldn't do it, he was hard headed fucker he wouldn't do it. Bennett said if you give it to them then, you know, they would have busted the union. U.A.W. would have never got in there. It would have never got in there. And now, fifty years later, they're following their plan. Give 'em what they want. When's the last time you got a raise? You ain't got shit.

Q We got profit sharing.

A Big fucking deal.

Q Don't you like profit sharing?

A No.

Q Why not?

A Profit sharing sucks. Give me a fucking raise.

Q Why.

A Mr. Page I want my raise.

Q What is the difference between a raise and profit sharing?

A So they come along with this fucking thing what, last week or a couple of weeks ago and they give you a check and say okay Vic you worked hard and you contributed to the cause. We're gonna give you two

thousand dollars. No wait a minute. I was part of that process, all these guys were part of that process, we build 'em, there's a profit sure enough. But you can take your profit and stick it in your ass. Give me a nine percent raise spread over three fucking years, and I will...

Q You would rather have a raise than profit sharing, why?

A Well, a pay raise is my sense of self worth okay. I'm worth that much, I've made a deal with the devil so to say to come in here and sell my fucking labor to you. You're gonna pay me for my god damn labor because you're gonna kill me in the long run anyway okay. The audacity to come along and to fuck an... this is the heirarchy of the U.A.W. now to even go along with that shit is disgusting okay. Because you no longer have the old come in there and negotiate with your fists like the tactics I was telling you about that I had to do a little of, they don't do that shit anymore. Now it's okay, well make this and do that. In the long run, the company is getting every fucking thing they want. Because that little bit of money that they gave you, you would have got any fucking way if you had that raise okay, and you would have had your self... You know instead of this fucking peacock feather shit running around I'm a Ford employee, okay, and that's what they want. They're blowing smoke up your ass and you fell for it.

Q Why are people falling for it?

A Because now they're saying we're part of the company. I mean you can talk to a guy, the guy takes a day off now, don't make no difference,

you know it don't make no difference the kid broke his arm, hey man your fucking with my profit sharing. What do you mean, fuck you and your profit sharing you know. Well that's my money, that's company's money and that's my money. Now it's no longer, them versus us, it's we. And that's the whole fucking concept of that... the Japanese theory of, and it's just a step away. It's just a step stones throw away. I venture to say, within ten years, they'll take guys like me with my attitude and we'll be phased out.

Q How?

A Because you know, even though I work around. I mostly work around salary personnel okay. And I hear these assholes, I mean, they talk about, they don't even fucking deal with anything real okay. There going to the Bahamas this week or they're going to Jamaica next week, and this this, and that that. I never hear any day-to-day real problems you know. I mean if I listened to this shit and take them literally, these guys got it fucking made. I mean there's no problems in there life. I mean I just can't believe that you know.

Q What do you think the auto plant is going to look like in ten years?

A What do I think it's gonna look like? Even the younger employees, I... you know, ah, at our plant, and when I say younger employees, I'm talking people with eight years okay.

Q So nobody's been hired since 1980?

A No. The younger ones are so fucking afraid their gonna lose their job, their afraid man. Their afraid there gonna lose the job, so they go along with anything. They're like cattle being led anywhere. They

put up no resistance to it, they don't even question. They say that I was in Vietnam. They did not, they will not question anything. And this shits going on right in front of 'em okay. Even some of the older employees, these guys with forty years, they're in debt to this company and there not. And what I mean by in debt, that they have just not prepared for anything that's gonna happen around them. And they will die in those fucking plants okay. And when those guys die, their jobs will not be replaced, they have a word they're using now it's called attrition. It's just phase them out. They don't replace you. If guys retire, the job is eliminated. There is nobody hired to do that job. They double the work up on another guy, they don't anything, they just work their fucking ass off day in and day out, and will not say nothing because they need and want that job. Of course, we all need work, okay, we have to survive. But they're so afraid to say anything about that extra work being put on, that they're just working at this incredible fucking pace.

Q If you were head of the union, what do you think the union should do about that? What would be the demand with the issues that you would raise?

A What would I do? I never really thought about what I'd do because I've avoided it as much as possible. Which I told you the other day the fuckers put my name on there.

Q What do you think the issues that should be dealt with are?

A I think that the... first off the American public is not buying our products because the Japanese are making a better automobile.

Q You believe that?

A They are. It's not that it's better, it's the same car, it's just a fucking machine right. But there's little extra touches on it that if you have put on an American automobile... Let's put it this way, you buy an automobile, give ten thousand dollars for that one there okay. You can go buy yourself this sporty spiffy model that's got every fucking thing under the sun on it for ten thousand dollars. They do it because it's cheaper labor, they've got these people with so much smoke blown up their ass that they just do a better job. American workers, on the other hand, I don't know where the fuck we're at. I really don't. I remember years ago, a guy on the line, fuck this, fucking sabotage the fucking cars and shit like this you know.

Q It doesn't go on now.

A No, I don't think so. I don't think so because of this made in America thing and this shit that's coming on ah, I don't whether it's just that I'm getting older, the work force is getting older, but they've become more conscious of what they're doing okay. And there's no new body since 1980, meaning people coming in there. There is nobody coming in there since 1980. The younger employees, and I'm saying up to eight years, are... you know, because the hammer's over their head. If you don't come, if you don't perform you're out you know.

Q What about the drugs? Has that changed from when we hired in, people were smoking in the bathrooms.

A It's changed, only in one sense, back then it was part of a... it was

cool, it was hip to be hip you know what I mean? You could smoke joints and get fucked up you know, it was just a thing. Now, there is a dependency on that shit. Maybe it was then, but I didn't see it. But I see it differently today because you got guys now, that come in, who are desperate for jobs that the only way they can make it is, these guys are drinking fifth of liquor, performing their jobs, they have a job okay, it's like a giant step backwards.

Q What percentage of the people you think...

A Shit, fifty percent of 'em.

Q Are alcoholics?

A Alcoholics and drug addicts. I mean we got coke dealers walking through the fucking plant. You know the crack man comes up and down the god damn line. It's crazy. I think it's in a sense it's actually worse now than it was then. Because back then you know it was... people were just doing it to be fucking up all the time you know, fucking off. Now, it's... I'll give you... There's a fella over there a young Cuban refugee. He come here prior to the revolution in Cuba right.

Q He's not so young then.

A He's not so young now, but he was a kid then okay. He is supporting his wife, his children, his cousins and everybody right. This mother fucker can't weight ninety pounds, and he's about six foot three. I thought it was because he was just working himself to death. No man, he's doing that coke everyday just to make it in these ridiculous hours, this ridiculous amount of work, he's half out of his fucking

mind. And the company looks at him and says he crazy. You know, he's not crazy, he's a very intelligent man, he's just fucked up and nobody knows it.

Q Do you think, you have five children?

A I have five children now. I had three from my first wife, and got remarried and had two.

Q How long?

A In 1979.

Q So that's almost ten years now. What's your biggest concern for them now?

A What's my biggest concern for them? That they're living in a world where there is.. that they're not gonna... See I'm a survivor okay. I believe you can put me under the worse conditions around, and I'd survive. My children don't know how to survive. I made a mistake with them, as hard as I was on them trying to get them to understand that... there's a very strong work ethic in my family, no doubt from listening to this okay. Everybody, I've worked since I was a kid. My kids, I didn't want them to have to do that. As little as I had at that time, I give them everything I had okay. Hoping that their intelligence would get them through on scholarships and shit through school. One of 'em did, but he quit okay, and he is now working in North Carolina in a steel fabricating shop for like seven bucks a hour, which I guess is good money down there. But I think to myself, seven dollars a hour, son of a bitch you need more money than I do, 'cause I'm entering into a phase in my life I don't need as much as

they're gonna need okay. And the sad part is, they will never and if he's... none of 'em will ever make what I'm making. Never. As I see it, because the jobs aren't there. The work is not there, the god damn prices of everything is so high that they don't have a snowball's chance in hell.

Q What do the other kids do?

A Cindy...

Q In terms of making a living.

A Cindy is a waitress. She's a waitress in Miami. Probably the worse part of fucking town, she's down there having to struggle down there. And she's ah, Cindy's twenty-three. She's twenty-three years old and having to work and wait on tables. Which there is nothing wrong with that. The reason I say it that way, is they just don't give you enough for your labor to survive on. She can't even survive on it man. If you get sick, you're in deep shit okay. My oldest daughter, is in Florida living with her mother and grandmother. The youngest girl is in Niles working at a job that pays her minumum wage, she has to drive fifty miles a day. The fucking job doesn't even pay her damn near enough to pay for her insurance and gas. She's living on poverty and is just to fucking proud to ask for anything. The youngest son is going to school.

Q Is he in high school?

A No, no. He's graduated. He's going to Henry Ford Community College. He's studying electronics.

Q What I seem to hear when I talk to everybody, I see that our

generation and particularly all of us who work in auto plants, have sort of reach, you know made a decent living economically and all that kind of stuff and now the kids won't. I think the first generation that that's not gonna happen, but the next generation won't do better.

A Open your eyes, you can see it. Anybody... see you have a young child, okay you have a baby. Now I've got young adults for children okay that my biggest fear is that they will never... My biggest fear for them is that they will live a life that I had to lead as a kid. But they'll have to do it as adults. And as you well know that there is a division of classes in this country that just, they just won't have that chance. It's hard to look at the mother fucker who is running around in a Mercedes Benz who, I watched this shit on television the other night. These guys in New York, ah, working at the stock market. Here we have somebody that's not even thirty years old and multimillionaires and how do they get it. Most of 'em are out there they're just fucking crooks. A kid sees that, you know, and that reflects back, why does a kid kill you, you look what he's got for a fucking example. I want to be like that. You take a kid that's growing up in the city now, in the inner city, who is his biggest idol, the biggest, baddest dope dealer on block. You got twenty-two year old... read the paper. Twenty-two year old guys who want that. And there's nothing wrong with working for something and getting it okay. But when the work is not there and you can't do it with some dignity about you, and your dignity has been stripped away from you as a kid anyway, who gives a fuck. This kids got a mentality, he's gonna

get it. And then when he gets it that way, these other kids look at him and say man I want to be like him.

Q You remember the U.A.W., your an auto worker, you got sixteen, seventeen years in now, what do you think the responsibilities of the U.A.W. are?

A I think that the god damn U.A.W. better get off their.

Q We're all working overtime.

A Sure, they're working overtime, they're working overtime because it's cheaper for the Ford Motor Company to work two shifts a twelve hours a god damn day, than to hire on a third shift and pay these people on the third shift, it's not profitable. It's not profitable for 'em. Even though you know, they do not feel a sense of responsibility back to mankind at all okay. It's money, fucking money, that's all anybody gives a shit about is money.

Q You got stock now, you got Ford Motor Company stock?

A Yea, I think I got nine shares of it. I got nine shares of it which blows my mind, I mean Rick this is part of that deal that they negotiated. I took the fucking thing and threw it in the garbage okay. They give me something... what?... last week?

Q Last week yea.

A My actual contribution to that... I didn't know, but they took three dollars and fifty cents out of me, out of one of my paychecks right, the fucking thing is worth twelve hundred dollars now. I'm going that's impossible. How can three dollars turn into twelve hundred.

Q That's why we haven't gotten pay raises?

A Right, but that's not your money again. That's the fucking stock market, that's these fucking crooks over here in New York doing that shit.

Q Something for when you retire.

A Big fucking deal, big fucking deal. You can take your weekly wages that you earn and save your money your own damn way. People have done it for years okay. But we live in... this is so fucking crazy I mean everything is just connected right back. We're talking stocks and shit right? Then you see a guy like this Bolski(?), this guy's got so much fucking money it's ridiculous. It's so much.

Q One hundred million dollars he gave back?

A Yea. When they popped him, he was worth three point eight billion. So here you got a guy on the line saying stocks yea... fuck, Bolski, money. Chump you ain't never gonna see nothing like that okay, never in a million years will you see nothing like that. It's crazy man, but everyone... now that's what these guys see. Now all of a sudden, here's a guy who has no education all of a sudden he's stock. He's got stock, I've made it. What are you talking, twelve hundred dollars, you know, most of those guys don't even know what the fuck that shit is okay, but all they know is they got stocks. They have vested interest in this company now okay. So that when you come by and say fuck 'em you know, they ask me, you know somebody will be say... You know, I'm like John Perry, you know John, everybody say how you doing, I'll say they're killing me man. They ask me, what do you mean killing you? I say they're killing me. You know and if

somebody ask me seriously what I'm talking about, I'll tell 'em. I'm in here every fucking day of my life, I haven't had a raise since then, okay you're out here busting your ass off, and then I let him know, that this god damn profit sharing stuff is the biggest fucking scam you're ever see pal and it's a way of ushering you way right out the fucking door.

Q You don't like the profit sharing, you don't the E.I., you explain the hazards of the new technology...

A You know why this company is doing that?

Q Why?

A And I do believe this that the god damn social security is gonna be fucking broke when you get ready to walk out there. There ain't gonna be nothing for you pal. And you've paid it in. That god damn money that you're paying every week, you're what paying forty, fifty fucking dollars a week. You take that god damn money and put it in the fucking bank, by the time you've worked thirty years, you'll have a million dollars to survive on. And it don't take a million dollars to survive on. But what's gonna happen when you retire, that fucking thing is gonna be broke, and if you get anything, you're gonna get a couple hundred bucks out of it. And you've paid in a million fucking dollars of your own money. Okay so the companies come along, saying boom, you better do this and this. They put this shit on the hierarchy over there and they're all... give me my fucking money I'll, fuck it.

Q What's the answer to the fact that the Japanese and the Koreans

everybody can produce cars, just as good, cheaper, as Americans what do we do? What kind of work should Americans do? What's the answer? What should folks do?

A Well, first off you know again, you take the culture of the Japanese versus the Americans okay. The American dream is what Rick, to have a house in the suburbs a new house, a couple of cars in the garage, going on vacation, and money in the fucking bank right. I don't know if the Japs think like that or not, because I've been through the Orient and I don't think... it's not their standards. Their culture just doesn't require what we do. We've created this fucking mess and there's got to be a way of getting out of this god damn thing you know. Why do you need a fucking Mercedes Benz to cruise around. Why do they pay a guy like Roger Smith millions of dollars every fucking year okay. Lee Iacocca, look at the fucking money he's got okay. Is is worth that kind of money, nobody's worth that kind money, nobody is worth that kind of fucking money man. You know, what do you need to cover your ass, some clothing, you need food, you need medical you know if you get sick. It doesn't take that kind of money to that shit, but we've escalated the prices of everything it's going to, it's gonna take. These guys with the millions dollars it's gonna take every fucking penny of that, plus some.

Q Do you think the relationship between the blacks and the whites has changed in the plant over twenty years? Gotten better or worse, not mattered, no difference, how do you see things black and white, a racial question.

A Racial questions?

Q Race relations.

A There worse now than what they were twenty years ago.

Q How to you see that? Can you give an example?

A Well one incident take a look at... and I'm saying that a lot of the white guys in the plant feel like they're being fucked over okay. It's hard for a guy that comes in there. Well, the law they just passed the other day right. A guys got twenty-three years, if you're a female they can bop you out of there because she's a female, you can be kicked off your job. Now here's a poor bastard who has giving twenty-three years of his life, and he's saying because I'm white and I'm a man, this happens to me, there is no fucking justice. This is crazy okay. But then on the flip side of the coin is we haven't created a society that is equal for everybody okay. Who pays the penatly? Not up here, not the fucking... not this hot shot ponchos, it's these poor fucking slobs down here. They're gonna pay the fucking price, your always gonna pay. That's just the way it is, how do you change that.

Q How has it changed in the plant over twenty years?

A You mean the relationships?

Q Yea. Think of when you went on the line the first year.

A Oh fuck, of course now Rick I'm like a hybrid plant man, I mean it's hard for me to say because I never looked at anybody being black or white okay. It's kind of hard for me to say. But as I see it now, you know, I'm seeing a rise of these fucking assholes down in North

Carolina clanning, coming out there, who gives a fuck where somebody lives okay, who really gives a shit you know. Here's somebody trying to make it just like you. And you're gonna fucking come out with that's crazy man.

Q How do you think women were treated in the plant over the years?

A Oh well I was ah...

Q You were a committee man when they hired women into the plant I remember.

A They were treated as ah... the only reason they were hired in at that point was the law at the time, they had to hire women okay. The women were hired, whoever had the biggest set of tits and the nicest shape okay. Literally that is the way they were in because you had guys like Al Brown go out there just like at the meat market. I mean and he'd... there's hundred and fifty people standing out there you know. If he figured he could get laid from you, you had the job.

Q That actually happened?

A This is actually happening in the committee room. In the fucking committee room.

Q He got laid in the committee room?

A Yes.

Q I never heard that story. I knew he used to get calls.

A I can't remember the gals name, but she worked in the trim department at the truck plant. Of course, I was full of piss and vinegar then, and I was looking for a cause okay. And if she had told me so much as what had happened to her, and I think I talked to you about it, and I

told her, I said I don't care how you describe it, that's rape. If you're put behind an eight ball and made to do something against your will, that's wrong.

Q You're working with a women now, Anita, she is a German born woman he poured coffee down Cecil's pants because... this is seven years ago.. because he was trying to put the make on her.

A Good for her, good for her.

Q She's back now, she got recalled to work on the same line.

A I was always amazed at the attitude even back then that the guys... There was guy Al Shaw remember him, Al Shaw. Worked over in the trim department, he said get these fucking women out of here. Now he was an old instigator from the union way back when. He said kick 'em in the cunt. And I looked at him, I said why do you think they're here. Well the law says this... I said no, the law may have helped somebody get a job, but these women in these fucking plants have probably got to take care of their children you know, they need the job just like you do. Ah fuck 'em, kick 'em in the cunt. Ah man, he was a sick fucker you know. And I guess I related to that because my mother having to provide for us you know.

Q Do you think that it is changed now? Do you think people are a little more accepting in the plant?

A No. Fuck no, it's just the same old shit, just a new face on it that's all. It's there. This situation with the blacks now are... the blacks are more expressful of the needs and... I find it ironic as hell man, I talk to these guys and I'm telling 'em what the fuck, just

do what you got to do. Well it's not that simple. There is still that fucking slave mentality. Honest to god it just blows my mind. I mean I can't believe I'm talking to a man that's fifty years old, has seen all this shit go on in our society, but has still been whatever it was in his life that beat him down still has that fucking mentality of fear. You have nothing to fear man you know, but it's there. I mean, then you take a look at the headlines in the paper, Michigan... University of Michigan one of the top ten universities in the world and look what they are doing out there. This is our fucking learning institutions and they are teaching there. Now you got to be smart enough to figure that shit out. It's bred in there, what's going on out here.

Q What are you going to do when you retire? Now that you got this half cushy job, half worrying job, not a bad job as jobs go.

A If I live long enough you mean?

Q Yea.

A Right now in my life right now I don't think I'm gonna live to retire. I'm not a very healthy person at this point in my life, and I don't know. If I do make it and I don't know... I really want to.

Q Why do you say that? How many operations?

A Well, since 1969, I've had twelve operations okay, literally. I've had this last thing that happened to me I have my hearts... I don't know what it's from. My dad, of course it might be hereditary I don't know. Had a nephew that died thirty-five years old. My dad died at thirty-five. I'm forty now. I've had two heart seizures in twelve

years and I'm forty okay. I feel like I... I don't know. So my concern in life right now is trying to give to Sue something that will help her survive if something happens to me. That's my only concern in my life right now. And my children. I don't have much, but if I can leave something, I'm trying to work that money to leave them something. It's not, it's just something to get them through the hard times. 'Cause there's always gonna be hard times, I don't give a shit... it's always. Life is nothing but a bitch away and a struggle.

Q Do you think there is any hope for a working person over the next twenty years to...

A I don't know what's gonna happen. I think the best thing that could happen in this country, is that there would be an overthrow of this fucking ridiculous government that we got. From my heart I mean this. We cannot go on this way. You can isolate yourself in the cities and isolate yourself away from the rest of the world, but it's gonna catch up with you. And I do believe it's gonna catch you. I mean look at the farmers. I mean the very essence of this country has been taken away from us. We have big acgri-firms owned by the Iranians, owned by everybody except us. Farms that have been in these countries, in the hands of families for a hundred, hundred fifty years, two hundred years, it's gone from them. People are killing themselves over this, I mean it's ridiculous. What's gonna happen is, they're gonna keep this shit up. They're gonna keep jamming until you have an entire fucking nation of people that is on welfare and is gonna get fed up with it. And maybe at that time, they'll say enough

is enough. Then we'll either, if an education doesn't come in, or if we cannot provide that education for people, then there's gonna be an armed confrontation and god knows what will happen at that point.

Q My wife and I haven't figured that out yet, how do you work the two your's money?

A I have my own account and he has his.

Q How do you divide up bills?

A When we get paid, he gets certain bills and I get certain bills.

Q And it works out?

A Yea. My seems a little bit more, but it works out. But ah, you can't get a job unless you're a professional person.

Q What do you mean?

A To make that kind of money.

Q You can't get a job like we have?

A I mean the money you make. The money we make. We would have to be at least professional people, lawyers, doctors to make more to make better money. Unless you're the president of a company or something you know.

Q Is that why you stay there?

A For the money? Yea. That's the only reason isn't it? It ain't the company.

Q I'm thinking about getting out, I'm gonna go teach history in high school.

A Are you. Well he wants to go be a teacher. He lacks a couple credits.

Q I just went back after twenty years.

A Yea.

Q I'll make two-thirds of what I make now to go back to teaching.

A Well if it's something that you really enjoy.

Q That's for sure, better than the plant. If they closed up the plant, or moved the plant to Mexico.

A Will I follow 'em? No.

Q How far would you follow Ford Motor Company to keep working in the auto plant?

A Gee you know, I don't know, I wouldn't go to far. You know all my close family is here. I wouldn't go to Mexico. What do they make, fifty-four cents a hour or something like that down there. No way. Steven's brother lives in Mexico. He teaches at the university down there. He's the kind of person that adapts to the new environment you know. He went to Mexico and found a women.

Q What does he teach?

A English.

Q He's an English teacher.

A Well not speaking in English. I don't think I would leave.

Q What do you.

A I was raised here, I was raised here in Wayne so...