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United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America,
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International Executive Board
Oral Histories

Daniel Forchione

Interviewed by Glenn Ruggles
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RUGGLES: This is August 21st and I'm Glenn Ruggles interviewing Mr. Dan Forchione at Solidarity House in Detroit. Mr. Forchione, let's begin with your birth, your early childhood and your parents. Could you tell us where you were born and who your parents were?

FORCHIONE: I was born in Canton, Ohio. My parents were Carmine and Concetta Forchione. My father came to the United States in the late 1800's and worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad and Republic Steel Corporation and then returned to Italy in 1906 and married my mother. She came over in 1909 with my oldest brother. They lived in Altoona, Pennsylvania and then later moved to Canton, Ohio. I have nine brothers and sisters, most of whom worked at either Ford or Republic Steel, as far as the boys were concerned. I've lived in Canton, Ohio most of my life, until I moved to Detroit in 1954 to work with the international union.

RUGGLES: What was your first work experience in the factories?

FORCHIONE: My first time in the factories was with Timken Roller Bearing Company. I had quit school in my junior year at the Timken Vocational High School, because my mother had promised to sign the papers for me to enter the military service. I had five brothers and brothers-in-law in the service at the same time and when they found out that I had quit school to join the service, they convinced my mother not to sign the papers. So, rather than return to school, I went to Timken Roller Bearing Company. I had caddied for the assistant factory manager at Timken for a number of years, both him and his wife, at Shady Hollow Golf Course. When I couldn't return to school, I asked him for a job and he gave me one.

He used to come down and visit me, two or three times a week, on the job, until I

joined a wildcat strike. He came down and said to me, "I see you joined the herd of wild elephants." That was the last time he came down to visit me on the job. But I worked at Timken Roller Bearing Company from 1943 to the time I went into the service in 1944. Then when I came back out of the service, I returned to Timken and worked there for another year or two and then went to Diebold Safe and Lock for a short period of time and then on to Ford Motor Company in October of 1948.

RUGGLES: That Timken Roller Bearing wildcat strike, do you recall the circumstances surrounding that wildcat?

FORCHIONE: The steward in the department was having a disagreement with the supervisor. The supervisor fired the steward and the rest of the department walked out in support of the steward who had been fired. Up to that point, I'd been in a quasi-management position, due to the fact that the assistant factory manager had brought me in. I was sort of a line man, or leader, over nineteen girls who were assembling airplane bearings at that point on the job. When I returned I was no longer a leader; I was more or less a stock pusher on the job. But I believe that the steward was correct in his arguments and should not have been fired. And he was reinstated, put back on the job.

RUGGLES: You were a member of the Steelworkers Union at that time? Not the UAW?

FORCHIONE: Yes, right.

RUGGLES: Was this a UAW plant?

FORCHIONE: No. Timken Roller Bearing was Steelworkers.

RUGGLES: And then you went to work for the Canton Drop Forge?

FORCHIONE: Went to work for Canton Drop Forge for a short period of time,

and there the blacksmith and drop forgers union was the union involved. Actually, I was fired from Canton Drop Forge because I refused to wash down machinery with a kerosene solvent, which was causing me to break out in a rash. The union representative told me at the time that he couldn't do anything for me.

RUGGLES: You were a member of the Boilermakers and Drop Forgers Union?

FORCHIONE: That's correct.

RUGGLES: What is a drop forge? What does that mean?

FORCHIONE: Well, many people have a misconception about the drop forge industry — of course, the drop forge industry today is much different that it was originally. Drop forge is generally a steam hammer or an air hammer which drops from a height. This was controlled by the treadle or the foot peddle that the operator uses to form a piece of hot metal into an object, whatever you're making. The particular job I worked on at the Canton Drop Forge was making the crankshafts for General Motors Electromotive diesel engines.

In today's world a drop forge can be done by a press which is pneumatically operated or electronically operated, but in the olden days of the drop forge, it was generally controlled by the skill of the hammer man controlling the amount of steam pressure that he allowed and how fast the ram dropped. He formed the piece by putting it first in a block, what we call a blocker, and then into a form die and then into the finished die. By rolling and moving the piece around at the same time, he was controlling the number of hits that the ram made on the piece. He formed whatever object he was making at that time.

RUGGLES: I see. Aside from this kerosene solvent, what other working

conditions made it unpleasant or unsatisfactory in those early days?

FORCHIONE: It really wasn't unsatisfactory. I had a guy, had a crew of guys that I worked with, that I had gone to high school with, prior to my going into the service. I knew everybody and we always had a good time. Being young, you know, you're not looking at work all the time. The atmosphere at the plant was good and it just so happened that I was allergic to the solvent that they were using, but they wouldn't recognize the fact that the solvent was disturbing me. I talked to the chairman of the unit out there that day. When he gave me the answer that he couldn't do anything for me, I got disturbed. I said, "Well then, the hell with it. I don't want my job back," and that was the end of working for Canton Drop Forge.

RUGGLES: Was that when you went in the Navy?

FORCHIONE: No, that was after I came back from the service.

RUGGLES: You were in the Far East, in the Pacific theater?

FORCHIONE: I was in the Pacific theater, on the *U.S.S. Shenango* during the Pacific-Asiatic war. My aircraft carrier, the *Shenango*, was one of four converted oilers, one of the first small carriers in the U.S. Navy, before they made the Kaiser-type and Block Island-type small carriers. They were utilized at first to mainly supply. Although we had planes on board, they were mainly used to supply planes for the bigger fleet carriers that were around. But then after Guam, they were used in the attack forces in the Philipines, the [unintelligible], the Okinawa invasion and Moritai and the Tinian invasions. They were utilized just like any other aircraft carrier. The small carrier became a standard carrier, because they could produce them faster and get them off to the Pacific theater.

RUGGLES: What was your job in the service, in the Navy?

FORCHIONE: I was a third-class mortar machinist's mate. Primarily, on the aircraft carrier, I was one of three people responsible for operating the diesel engines during take-off and landing of aircraft and provided the emergency power for the aircraft in the event that the main power was knocked out.

RUGGLES: You took some of your factory skills into the service with you, then?

FORCHIONE: Some. It just so happened that after I left Great Lakes, I was selected to go to the diesel school at the University of Illinois and spent six months at the University of Illinois learning diesels and had a good experience with that.

RUGGLES: When you came back, by 1948 you were a snag grinder at the Ford Motor Company in Canton again.

FORCHIONE: That's correct.

RUGGLES: What is a snag grinder?

FORCHIONE: When a forging is made, particularly the forging dealing with the spindles of an automobile, it's made on an extrusion press and it's a hot metal put in with oil. The dies are oiled very heavily and when the spindle is formed, at the top of the spindle is a thin piece of scrap metal that hangs on, and that has to be trimmed off. When that edge gets cold, it has to be ground off rather than cut off, because it turns black and the metal that would normally be used to trim the spindle had to be ground off. Then you use a big twenty-inch grinding wheel and you stand there and grind and let the hot sparks fly all over you and tear up your clothing as they stick to you. That's basically what snag grinding is. It's a form of grinding to remove excess metal.

RUGGLES: Was there any danger to it?

FORCHIONE: Well, there was always the danger of your hands slipping and going into the grinding wheel, and Canton did not have a lot of protective devices in 1948. You worked at a fairly good speed, because it was an incentive operation. The hot sparks and the pieces of the hot flash, as the metal got ground off, the excess pieces maybe would fly. They would stick to your clothing and because they were hot, they would burn holes in it or if they hit you on the bare skin, they would burn you. Most of us dressed rather heavily in the forging industry; even though the temperatures inside the plant reached 140 degrees, most of us had long underwear on and sweatshirts. This particular job was a clothing-destroyer, so to speak. My wife used to patch patches on top of patches on sweatshirts and underclothes where the holes had been burned into the clothing.

RUGGLES: It's about this time that you start to get involved in union activities. Were you a member of the UAW as a snag grinder?

FORCHIONE: Well, when we first started in the plant, there was an organizing committee that was being formed in the plant. And of course, coming from a small town like Canton, most of the people that worked in the plant I knew, either from my early childhood or from high school, or were relatives. Many of the Italian community people were involved in that. I knew them most of my life in the area. I signed a card as soon as the organizing drive started and was elected to the first executive board of the local union. I was 22 years old when I was elected as a guide, which was the lowest position on the executive board. The function of the guide is to register people as they come in and out of the meeting and help the sergeant-at-arms maintain order during the course of

the meeting.

RUGGLES: It was during this period in the late forties that Walter Reuther and the other leaders of the UAW were organizing and solidifying the UAW, just after he had been elected in '47. There was an awful lot of Communist infiltration at this time, and a lot of the union leaders were trying to clean house. Did you encounter any of this Communist or left-wing activity in the Ohio area?

FORCHIONE: Well, the Canton plant, you know, was the former unit of the Local 600, Dearborn Rouge plant. But nobody transferred down from the Rouge plant. There were a couple people that were hired into the plant that many of us thought might be left wing, although coming from a small town, you didn't have the exposure to the so-called left wing or the Communist bloc, as we know some of them today. When you look back, there were a couple people that you would put in the category that if he looks like a duck and he acts like a duck and he quacks like a duck, you had to assume he was a duck, but there were never any real Communists, so-called, as we've seen it in some of the plants up here in Detroit.

RUGGLES: The Ford Local 600 was heavily influenced by Communists up in Dearborn.

FORCHIONE: I don't know if there were some people that were tried up there for being Communists or other people who were known as left-wingers. There were some so-called informers to the McClellan Committee and a few others that were up there. But in my experience with the union, you judge a person on what they do, not what their particular ideology might be. Many of the people that were accused of being left wing or Communist had different ways of doing things. Some were politically

motivated by things they deeply believed in. When you look back over some of the accomplishments that were made by some of the so-called left, they are fairly good accomplishments. If you didn't attach the stigma of the Communists or the left-wing element to it, they would still be accomplishments, regardless of who had done them.

RUGGLES: In 1949, the UAW won its first fully employer-paid pension program. That was in negotiations with Ford. This was just the year before you became president of your local. Did you have a hand in these negotiations?

FORCHIONE: Well, not in the negotiations for the pension itself. Unfortunately, as you look back over it, the Canton plant was a brand new plant. We had gone through the original growing pains of trying to negotiate local agreements and local wage structure in the Canton plant. The first agreement that we had to write to ratify in the Canton plant provided for a very minimal wage increase. I think the wage increase was something like a penny or from a penny to three cents. The pension was, of course, the centerpiece of the 1949 negotiations. But the fact is that the Canton plant, at that time, probably had the average age of about 27 or 28 at the most. They weren't interested in the pension agreement and they were one of the two (I think there were two locals in the country) that turned down the agreement that year. If you were to go back and ask those same people that were present in the 1949 contract ratification meetings, some of whom were still working in the plant in Canton, what their preferences are today as to what they should negotiate for, it's a complete reversal. Three hundred and sixty degrees: pension and health insurance are the most important items for them, as they now face it.

RUGGLES: Some of the UAW milestones are quite relative, I suppose, as to where you stand.

FORCHIONE: Oh, sure. They are very significant to the people in the plant. I've always thought that there's three or four stages a worker goes through when he goes into the plant. When he gets hired into the plant, generally he's a single fellow and all he's looking for is money and time off. He doesn't want to work any overtime and he doesn't want to clutter up his time, but he wants to have a lot of bucks in his pocket in order to be able to do what he wants to do. Then, as he marries, of course he starts looking for the security of hospitalization. As he gets a little older in the plant, he starts looking for the job security, so as his children are growing up, he's secure in his job. Then of course, when he gets in the last stages, he's looking for the health protection plus the pension protection for what he's going to do after he retires. I've always looked at that as maybe the four stages that a worker goes through.

In the years that I've serviced, you can mainly pick out, if you service a plant long enough, you can mainly pick out those guys that were opposed to a contract for a particular reason in a particular year. You will see them making the full turn as they get older in the plant and become the guys that are more vocal, in favor of certain things, while the young guy might be crying about more money. That person is now getting up on the floor and saying, "Well, what about us old fellas? We want some more pension," or whatever. Everybody — I think you find this out throughout the union activities — everybody looks after their own horse first. Sure, we look after the other guy too, but as long as your horse is protected a little bit, then you don't mind that their horse gets a little protection. I think everybody feels that way.

RUGGLES: By 1950 you're really getting involved in the union. You're going to be elected president and Bargaining Committee chairman. Was this happening by

accident? Or were there conditions that provoked you to get more involved in the UAW?

FORCHIONE: I was not elected chairman the first time; I was appointed as the acting chairman of the plant, when the local was put under administratorship. During our period of organizing and forming the local union, we had a couple challenges by other unions for the representation of the Canton workers. The first challenge was the International Die Sinkers Conference, who wanted to represent the skilled trades people only in the Canton plant. We defeated the International Die Sinker Conference in a representative election that they had down there.

Then in the early fifties, after a turbulent period, the officers that were elected in 1950 were, in my opinion, rather irresponsible. They had called a wildcat strike, which was really of no necessity. I was working on the midnight shift then and when I came to work that night, there was a picket line in front of the plant and I asked the president of the local union why it was there. He told me that the powerhouse wall had moved four feet. I asked him, "Well, did the powerhouse collapse?" Normal common sense would tell you that if a wall moved four feet, that chances are the wall fell in. He said, "No," and he walked away from me and I followed him. Then I saw that they had weapons on them and they'd been drinking. I talked with a number of people on the picket line and convinced them that they should go back in and go into work, and we went to work that night and of course the next morning when we came out, there were more people on the picket line and then a wildcat strike ensued.

What we found out later was that they had a number of secret meetings with the Boilermakers and Drop Forge Union. The Boilermakers were trying to get them to disaffiliate with the UAW, and to come into the Boilermakers. A group of us wanted to

stay in the UAW and we met with Ken Bannon, who was then the director of the national Ford Department, and asked him how to go about maintaining our ties with the UAW. He gave us a great amount of assistance.

We had some people from other local unions that came in and helped us, because the group that was out there seemed to get a little bit wilder as the wildcat progressed. The person that was the president of the local union walked around with a forty-five stuck in his waistband. One of the other people had a long knife strapped to his side. There was a fear, of course, of some violence there. We called the sherrif's department and the sherrif's department said as long as they don't attack anybody and the weapons are in the open, there was not much that they could do about it. But they did have patrol cars out there in the event that any problems started.

Well, we finally broke that wildcat and returned the people to work after a major meeting. We had a mass meeting downtown and explained what the issues were and everything else and led them in a car caravan back to the plant. Shortly after that, Ken Bannon appointed me as the chairman of the unit while it was under administratorship. So I was the in-plant acting chairman while the administratorship was under the regional director, who was then Pat O'Malley in Cleveland.

RUGGLES: He took charge of the local as an administrator?

FORCHIONE: Yes, as the administrator, yes. He had a representative by the name of Ed Schultz who was his direct representative in the plant.

RUGGLES: And this was before you became president?

FORCHIONE: Well, I was appointed as an acting chairman, but you know, in the UAW you don't appoint people to those positions. They can be appointed for a short

period of time until an election is held. At that time we had elections every year and my first election in running for the office of president occurred in January or February the following year and I was defeated by 18 or 19 votes. No, the election took place in September of 1950, following putting the people back to work after the wildcat strike, and I served for a two to three month period there, in which I was the acting chairman, but the election took place in September because my son, my oldest boy was born on September 27 and that was the day of the election. Of course, I left the polling places to go to the hospital to be with my wife when my first child was born. Some of the older members in the local union felt that my leaving the local union at the time the election was taking place and not being interested enough to pass out my cards as people were going into the polling place showed that I was too young (I was just 24) and I was not interested, really, in the job of president. So I lost that election by 19 votes, because I was away from the polling place most of the day of the election.

That was for the unexpired term of the previous officer, who had been removed from office. We had come to Detroit for what was then the show-cause hearings that were necessary in order to remove an officer and put a local under the administratorship. That was shortly after Walter had been shot. Emil Mazey was chairing the meetings. Of course, being the guide of the local union, which is the lowest position on the local union executive board, I got to go up for the meetings. All the way up in the car, the previous president, who had been defeated by a sort of nutty group, was talking about how he was going to tell the executive board of the international what the hell was going on, and what they should do. So we listened to that speech. It was a four-hour drive from Canton and we listened to that speech between him and the former committeeman and a couple others

that were in the car, about how they were going to tell everybody up here what they had to do, all the way up.

By the time we reached the Belcrest Hotel, which was where the international had its executive board meetings at that time, they kept pushing me forward to make the presentation for the local union, because the closer we got to the [unintelligible], the less they wanted to make this big speech that they were making. I was selected to be the spokesman for the local union, to explain to the International Executive Board what the problems were down in Canton. I recall that I went before the board and I was extremely nervous. Ed Cody, who was the regional co-director of the west side region, leaned over to me (Ed always wore a little tam) and said, "You don't have to be nervous. We're workers in this room just like you are." And I blurted out, "Yes, but this is the first time I ever got to talk to the big brass." Emil Mazey, for years after that, when he'd see me in the hallway or something, he'd say, "You still talking to the big brass?," or make some kind of a comment. He almost busted a gut that night. Anyhow, following the election in September for the unexpired term, we then had an election in February the following year for the regular term. Then I won the election for chairman and president and I served until 1953.

RUGGLES: Any particular problems during that period of your presidency that you can recall? Any unusual events?

FORCHIONE: Well, we had a major strike, shut down the entire Ford Motor Company in 1953.

RUGGLES: Is that the one that was sparked by Marvin Shultz's letter to the newspapers?

FORCHIONE: Well, it was partially based upon the letter that Marvin Schultz had put out. But the conditions in the Canton plant . . . Canton was one of the first major manufacturing plants that Ford Motor Company had moved out of the Detroit area in their decentralization program. There had been a few other small manufacturing plants outside of the Detroit area prior to the decentralization move, but this was the first one of decentralizing the Rouge operations.

The conditions in the plant were bad. Ford Motor Company didn't pay good attention to health and safety. You're working in a forge plant, which is an extremely dangerous plant to start off with. The machinery was crowded close together, and if you've ever been in a drop forge plant or a forging plant, when you have machinery that's that close together, when a hammer or a heavy press hits the metal, the outside casing of the metal (which has been cooked), breaks off in what they call flash. Sometimes that spurts 25 or 30 feet. You're walking down an aisle or you're working right across from one of those big hammers and that ram would come down and you'd have your back to it or something and all of a sudden you'd feel all this hot metal just sticking to you. There was a lot of things: the smoke, the grinding, the noise, and the crowding of the aisles and crowding of space that we thought were unsafe conditions.

We shut down Ford Motor Company and were down from April 19, I believe it was, to May 26. We didn't choose the date of May 26 because that happened to be the anniversary of the Battle of the Overpass, but it just so happened that that was the end of the strike. During that period, national negotiations were re-opened. And of course, we were always accused of striking the Canton plant and shutting down the nation in order for the national negotiators to re-open the contract, the five-year contract that was signed

in 1950, which had been called the "living document" strike. We were always accused of striking the Canton plant for that reason, but the Canton plant was struck strictly for the reasons of health and safety. In fact, if things were known, Ken Bannon had called me the night before, after our membership meeting and the night before we actually put the pickets on the line, and asked me to withhold the pickets until they could get down there and I told him it was too late, that we were going out. They were already in negotiations nationally, and the Canton strike had nothing to do with the thing, but we were always credited, so to speak, with opening up the five-year contract.

RUGGLES: The strike did spread to the point where layoffs nationwide occurred.

FORCHIONE: Yes. The Canton plant made 100% of the axles and 100% of the spindles that went on a car and as soon as that supply ran out, it shut down all the assembly plants. Of course, it had a backup effect in all the others. The nation was pretty much shut down for that period of time.

RUGGLES: I understand the floors were even made of wood and covered with grease so that tractors would slide into the men.

FORCHIONE: Yes, you had the old creosote, block-type floor, which Ford used in many of its plants at that time, not only the Canton plant, but some of the plants that followed even after that. The creosote would get oil-soaked and then it would become just . . . Between that and the shot-blast pieces that come out of our . . . We had three or four shot-blast machines, because after you forge a piece and it's formed, it's got to be cleaned, because it's got a lot of flash and caked metal on it, so it had to go through shot-blast machines. Of course, shot-blast machines use a little pellet, much the same as

buckshot, and it's forced against the metal and knocks off all the loose and hanging metal on that particular part. Those machines were not perfected, as they are today, and there was a rubber lining that went alongside the door. As those pellets were pushed under pressure inside that shot-blast machine, they tore holes in that rubber lining and then you could be walking by one of those shot-blast machines and get hit on the arm. It stings; it's like you get shot with a shotgun. And they're all over the floor, and of course those things are just like a piece of ice. You can imagine millions of buckshot laying on the floor and you're trying to walk on them and they're rolling on the floor.

So, the conditions in the Canton plant got to the point where they were just horrendous, so we decided to do something about it. We had a number of health and safety and a number of work [unintelligible] disputes and rates and classification disputes, which were strikable issues under the Ford contract. We decided to try to correct them.

RUGGLES: Some of the articles we have indicate that if Schultz . . . Schultz was a company man?

FORCHIONE: He was the industrial relations manager.

RUGGLES: . . . that if he hadn't issued this article to the Canton Repository, the strike wouldn't have occurred, it could have been headed off.

FORCHIONE: Well, I don't know. I think the strike would have occurred regardless of what Marshall said or what the newspaper said. In fact, we had made up our mind; when we took it to the membership meeting that day, the international union was trying to talk us out of going on strike right then because they wanted to negotiate some more. We allowed the international representatives who were present at the

meeting to make their presentation and then I put the vote to the membership and the membership voted to strike, so we struck. I think the circumstances were such that the plant would have been struck; we had gone too far, really, to pull back and say no.

RUGGLES: Then, the local of any union is not the puppet of the international board. There is quite a bit of independence or autonomy.

FORCHIONE: Well, they are not a puppet. The autonomy is there for the local union, but there are rules that the local must make application for a strike authorization. It must take a strike vote and have the membership fully informed. We had met all those conditions. We had been meeting with the company and couldn't resolve the issues. Although people were trying to say, "Well, hold off a little bit, you don't have to do it by a certain date. You have to give the company notice." At that time it was a twelve-day notice that you had to give the company and we had gone through that twelve-day notice. It wasn't a question of us defying the international union or just wanting to strike the plant. We just thought that as a local union, we had taken every step that we could take. We had gone through all the proper procedures. We had gone to our membership and our membership was fully determined that they didn't want to work any more, so we struck the plant, although some pleaded with us not to. It was not that they threatened us or anything like "Well, if you do this, you're going to have some kind of problems." There were just some phone conversations made to try to head off the strike, but I just took the position that it was just too late to do that. In fact, Ford Motor Company representatives called me late the night before the strike started and asked me to reconsider, that they would come in the following day and see if they could work out the problems. And I said it was just too late. It had gone just too far.

RUGGLES: It would be safe to assume, then, that it's a fairly democratic process, in that the workers have the final say.

FORCHIONE: They have, well, they have the say.

RUGGLES: By taking the vote.

FORCHIONE: The final say is that of the International Executive Board, granting them the permission to do that. If they thought that a strike was not in the best interests of that local union or in the best interests of the union overall, they would deny strike authorization. But we already had strike authorization. We had gone through the proper procedure and strike authorization was there and we had been threatening Ford Motor Company for twelve days prior to that, after we gave them their final notice, saying, "If you don't meet these conditions, we're going to strike the plant." It was not that they had withdrawn the strike authorization, because we had that. It was just a question of timing, of when it should occur, rather than the other. When most local unions abide by the rules and there is a need for a strike authorization, it's given, because if there's no need and there's an endangerment to the union as a whole, then it's going to be withheld.

RUGGLES: By '53 you have ended your tenure as president and in 1954, you become an international representative assigned to the Ford Department. And you're assigned nationwide, if my information is correct.

FORCHIONE: Well, the national Ford Department services all of the Ford plants under the auspices of the contract, regardless of where they're located. When I came on the national staff, because I had an incentive plan that I came out of and there were work standard problems that we handled in the plant, Ken Bannon assigned me to

health and safety and work standards wherever a problem occurred, nationwide.

RUGGLES: I read an article that said you had trouble with a fellow that was objecting to a contract. Do you recall a fellow by the name of Walter Surazinski, Local 425? He was objecting, claiming that the contract agreement was selling their members down the river. This was in 1958, when you were an international rep. Do you recall how you handled that situation with Walter?

FORCHIONE: Well, that was after I had worked for the national Ford Department from 1954 to 1957. And then in 1957 I requested to go back to the region, and was assigned to the regional staff in Cleveland. The '58 contract provided for the transfer of various people from the plant into the Lorain assembly plant. Walter Surazinski happened to come from the Buffalo assembly plant, which was one of the first plants to be transferred into the Lorain Assembly Plant. Then later on, the Sommerville, Massachusetts plant was also shut down and those people were given the opportunity to transfer, some to Lorain and some to Mahwah, New Jersey, which was then moving from Edgewater to the new Mahwah plant.

Walter was very self-styled, independent, not only of the international union, but of his own local union officers, members. In fact, the boys at Lorain had a nickname for him: they called him the Captain. Walter lived directly across from the plant. It was one, single home that was still standing after they had cleared the property for Ford Motor Company. It was across Route 6 and 2. And Walter rented that property and that's where he lived and of course he watched everything going in and out of the plant. Walter disagreed with many things, just for the sake of disagreeing. He was sort of anti-international, anti-authority or anything else.

I sort of felt a little sorry for Walter, because I never thought he had the real grasp of what was going on in that big plant. He had moved from a plant maybe twelve or fourteen hundred people in Buffalo, in which he was a very minor officer in the local union, and had moved to a plant that was now employing anywhere from three to seven thousand at any given time. I think it overwhelmed him, really. We went to the membership meeting and Walter, of course, was opposed to the agreement. I was in favor of the agreement, so we just . . . [end of tape]

RUGGLES: We had mentioned that the vote was extremely low, and I was wondering if that was an ordinary or common occurrence.

FORCHIONE: Well, as a general rule, contract ratifications get a pretty good turnout. You have to know the particular location there at Lorain. The local union hall where we had the vote was a hall downtown in Lorain, away from where the hall is presently located. When you have a strike, like you did in '58, people scatter. You had people transferred in there from three different plants, so they're on strike. But many of them, when they transferred, did not bring their families with them. They were living in rooming houses and so forth. If they're not sure if it's picketed, they might go back to Buffalo, which was a five-hour ride from there. They might go back to Memphis, which was a nine-hour ride. They might go back to Sommerville, Massachusetts, which was a nine- or ten-hour ride, and then when their picket duties come up, they would return. So, the location of the hall itself and maybe getting notice of a ratification meeting late sometimes has a bad effect, but as a general rule, ratification votes are fairly well attended, especially if you've had a strike, and you did in '58 at some locations.

RUGGLES: Just to digress for a moment. It was in this period of the late fifties

and early sixties that a move occurred to appoint or elect a minority member to the UAW executive board, both a black minority member and a woman. That did occur: Nelson Jack Edwards became the first black and Olga Madar, in 1966, became the first woman. Did that cause any disturbance or was there an effect throughout the locals, over this issue?

FORCHIONE: I don't think so. There wasn't any in any of the locals that I serviced. You had some people who in one particular local, I think there were two or three of the delegates in one particular local who voted for another person who was running, rather than one of the slate of candidates. But there was no objection, per se, to a black being elected, or to a woman being elected. It might have been a personality, as to which woman or which black, but not, that I recall, any major upheavals or even any basic conversation about that.

RUGGLES: It was in the mid-fifties also — let me back up just a little bit — when quite an historic event occurred in that Mr. Bannon negotiated the first Supplemental Unemployment Benefits Plan.

FORCHIONE: 1955.

RUGGLES: And I don't know exactly where you were then, in between international rep and either at the national level or at the regional level.

FORCHIONE: I was still with the national Ford Department at that time.

RUGGLES: Did you have a hand in negotiating it?

FORCHIONE: Well, only as a peripheral thing. We were assigned, various members of the staff were assigned to particular items of the contract. If I recall correctly, I was assigned to the work standards arguments that were going on and I

worked with some of the subcommittees on the work standards argument, but I was not involved with the actual negotiation of the SUB plan or things of that nature. I was there at the Detroit Leland Hotel when the negotiations were concluded and during the period of time the negotiations were going on. But the national Negotiating Committee and, oh, Ken and Walter and their aides and the administrative assistants of the Ford Department, the assistant directors, were involved in this. But the international staff representative, as a general rule, works on subcommittees, rather than being involved in the actual big-item presentations at the main table, which are done by the national Negotiating Committee and the experts that we hire for the economics and the other things.

RUGGLES: But does the work on the subcommittee lead to the major issue?

FORCHIONE: Oh, sure. But as an example, our benefit people, who were then handling the benefits sections of the contract, would have been involved with those people that were dealing with the SUB and the guaranteed annual wage.

RUGGLES: Can you describe in a little more detail your work on the SUB committee?

FORCHIONE: Well, I was a rather new member and I was there on the work standards, the problems that I had been servicing throughout the year as to what was happening on work standards, and we were trying to change the contract language, both in the work standard area and the health and safety area, for the things that we were doing.

It was pretty hard in those days to get Ford Motor Company to give you information about the work standards. Up until the last minute, they would withhold the information about the work standards, but maybe let you look at the copy of the actual

finalized work sheet. But the work sheets that lead up to how they developed the standard, the amount of time they allowed for fatigue and the amount of time they allowed for various items in the work standards may not have been available to you. So you had to go out and take some snap readings of your own and make a judgment. We didn't take time studies, per se. You'd have to go out there and take a look at the job and make some snap studies and get an idea for yourself as to whether or not the standard was too heavy or whether or not some worker was trying to give you the business on the thing.

You know, it's very easy for a worker on the job to make it appear that he's working his head off. You go in and fight like hell to get a standard reduced and then you find out that the guy can make the standard rather easily and he has to lose time. I had that experience at the Canton plant when I was president of the local union, when we had work standards disputes in the incentive plan and you truly believed that a person was having a tough time making his standard and then after you resolved the standard issue, then that person went ahead and made four or five hours bonus rather easily and quite early. Then you don't worry about whether or not you're actually seeing what you're seeing, so to speak.

There's many ways in a Ford shop that a person can sort of fool you on what they're doing. They might hit the piece five times instead of twice, because you have to fill in a forging. The number of hits you make might make the contour fill out. Well, if you use a cold piece of metal that's not quite hot enough, when you hit it, when you strike it, it doesn't fill everything it's supposed to fill. It becomes a piece of scrap. You might have to hit it three or four times in order to make it fill out. The longer you've got it in

one spot, the colder the metal is getting, the harder it's going to be to do the next operation. So, there are ways that they can do that.

I was a little bit wary of it when I first went out in the field. I used to be very careful in making sure that the guy wasn't giving me the business before I went in and started arguing with him. But once I was convinced that the job was tight, then I would go in and make a full argument. But that was basically what we were trying to do, to get more information, more data.

RUGGLES: Your own early experience in the drop forge plant must have been invaluable in this area.

FORCHIONE: It really wasn't, because it was a completely different function, so to speak. When I was at the drop forge plant, I worked not so much on the forging end of the piece, but on welding the parts of the crankshaft together on the electro machine. It's an electric weld process, in which the two pieces are held together by clamps inside of a machine and then a weld is made around the two pieces, because a twelve-cylinder crankshaft for a diesel engine might need the likes of this room. The crankshaft, because you can't make that in one piece, you might as well make it in two-and-a-half- to three-foot sections, and then you weld those pieces together on the electro machine. Then you machine it, so that it's one piece when you put it in the diesel.

RUGGLES: This room is twenty feet long, isn't it, at least?

FORCHIONE: Well, if you look at even today's more modified engines on a diesel engine on a railroad, you would see the length of that. That covering in front of the engineer is generally all of an engine, and it's a diesel engine, as a general rule, that's out there in front. So you know, the length of it is pretty good.

RUGGLES: About the same time, in the late 50's/early 60's, skilled tradesmen in the UAW are beginning to grumble and complain about their bargaining powers. How did you deal with that issue?

FORCHIONE: Well, I didn't have much opportunity or need in the area that I was dealing with. From ’54 to ’57, I was mainly involved with the work standards, health and safety items of complaint. Then, when I transferred back to the region in 1957, I was servicing basically three plants which had started in the early fifties and were still going through growing pains. And then the Lorain plant came on stream in 1958 and I was servicing it, again, a plant that was going through a series of growing pains, trying to get local negotiations up to date, and things of that nature. So the skilled trades issue itself was not as prevalent down there. The movement started up here at the Rouge Plant and a few other locations and sort of swelled. And of course, the skilled tradesmen in those plants wanted that extra dollar too, but in my own experience I was not exposed to it that much.

RUGGLES: It was in 1957 that the UAW established the Public Review Board. Do you have any thoughts or comments about that? It has become controversial to some people.

FORCHIONE: Well, it has not been controversial to me. I think the step that Walter took in 1957 to give well-known people the opportunity to sit and make a decision over rulings that were made provided, I think, a more democratic base for this union than they have in other unions. There was nothing for appeal or for your day in court, so to speak. Rather than have somebody who has made an original judgment against you also be the judge in the next thing, I think the . . . And I really didn't hear any complaints

against that procedure. I think most of the locals in Ohio voted for it when it was put up before the convention. I don't think there was any real problem with it. I think there was a pride on the part of the local union leadership that our union would go outside and have that kind of a protective thing. I think over the years it's worked out exactly as Walter envisioned it.

RUGGLES: There were some complaints that it was super-legalistic, that it was almost like a Supreme Court overruling the International Executive Board.

FORCHIONE: Well you know, when you've got a case that you've made a decision on and it gets overturned, then you're going to have some sour feelings about it. I would think that you as a school administrator, as a teacher in a school, if you made a decision in your classroom, and later on the principal overruled you in that decision on a technicality or some other thing, you might feel very strongly about it. I think that overall PRB has been a very beneficial thing for this union.

RUGGLES: In 1960, the issues of outsourcing and Japanese imports became very big and I've seen, in fact, a letter written by you in 1962, that said you were concerned about Ford Motor Company stocking bearings made in Japan.

FORCHIONE: Well, I was servicing a parts depot in Cleveland and we began to get bearings in that parts depot that were for after-market sale, for replacement of the bearings. The bearings we were getting were not very good quality. They came in a tube and sometimes those tubes when you opened them up were just full of rust. Well, you know, you put a little oil on them and then they sell them to somebody to put in their car and first thing you know, you got a car that was no good. We were watching all of the outsourcing. One of the major issues we always had in this union was outside contracting

and it applied basically to skilled trades. But we were always concerned that our work was going to be given to somebody else and that would cause some reduction of jobs in Ford.

RUGGLES: So it dealt not only with job protection, but with the quality of the product.

FORCHIONE: Right. And, you know, quality at that time, Ford Motor Company made that an exclusive management prerogative. If you talked to them about the quality of a job, either in an assembly plant or manufacturing plant, you were basically told at that time, "That's none of your business. We'll worry about the quality; you just make as many pieces as we tell you to make." And, of course, my classification was inspector, so I got a little touchy about some of those areas.

RUGGLES: You spent most of your life with Ford Motor Company. Are they a tough company to deal with?

FORCHIONE: They're tough in a lot of ways and I think more receptive to some ideas in other ways. It depended on the individual you were dealing with. Many individuals in Ford Motor Company had sympathy, so to speak, for what you were arguing about, but maybe their superiors weren't as sympathetic. I think in general, overall, the modern Ford Motor Company, after we got by, say, '55 or even a little bit later than that — probably '58, when we worked without a contract during that period of time — I think that they were fairly good people to deal with.

Basically, most of the people you dealt with on an individual basis were honest people. You can understand them trying to protect the company's interest while you were trying to protect the union's interest. You dealt with people on that kind of a basis and if

you found one that didn't deal that way, that was trying to deal under the table, then you did everything you could to destroy that person or make that person not look good in the eyes of his superior so that he isn't around very much, because that kind of a guy can be a bad character for you to deal with.

RUGGLES: In 1964 Henry Ford II made a speech in which he criticized the UAW's demands and said that he would risk a strike and even thought that bringing in President Johnson to play a role in the negotiations was a good idea. Do you recall that situation?

FORCHIONE: No. By '64 I was probably too busy with the local unions in Cleveland because they were very militant. All the local unions in the Cleveland area were very militant. We had a foundry and casting plant, an engine plant, that started in 1952. We had a stamping plant that started in 1953 and we had an assembly plant which started in 1958. Sometimes I think that they were trying to see which one could be the most militant. Of course, I was the rep servicing all of them and I was running between the three of them, a seventy-five-mile radius, besides living in Canton, trying to satisfy them.

RUGGLES: It was about this time, about 1964, that many of the Ford locals overturned about fifty percent of their officers, especially in the assembly plants. Was that a sign of discontent among the rank and file?

FORCHIONE: Well, I don't know if you can call it discontent. You do things that you think are right at the time that you're doing them. Individuals sometimes make mistakes. I don't know if there's any particular trend in '64 that said that the guy that was in had to go. As locals get older, they sort of stabilize. When you have young locals, like

I had down in Cleveland, you can have a change every year because there's always somebody emerging that says, "I can do it better." Until the membership finds which one can do it the best, you'll have some changes in the leadership of the local union.

RUGGLES: It was about this time also, in the early sixties, that Ralph Nader appeared on the scene. You've spent most of your life trying to improve workers' standards and Ralph Nader comes along making demands that car standards be improved. What impact, if any, did this have on the UAW? This tremendous move towards car standards?

FORCHIONE: I don't know that it had any impact on the UAW. There were some people that agreed with what he was saying, there were some people that disagreed with what he was saying. But I don't think it affected the policy of this union, other than the fact that we had constantly harped . . . You can go back through the files of Ford Motor Company and see that Ken Bannon had sent them letters in the sixties about production of small cars, about production having a higher quality.

If I recall correctly, the Louisville assembly plant had already been geared up to make a small car called the Cardinal. I think that was in '67, memory's a little foggy. They had geared up to make a small car called the Cardinal and then that was shipped over to Germany. It was taken out of that plant and shipped over to Germany. They had already spent money to refurbish the plant, got it almost ready to go into production.

Walter had been talking for a few years before that, I think it goes back to 1949 that Walter proposed a car that weighed less than five thousand pounds, got high mileage and was very cheap to sell, and they called it a "Small Car Named Desire." In my office I've got some of the old literature on the "Small Car Named Desire" that Walter had

proposed. If you look at today's car, the Escort, and the smaller cars that are made by the other manufacturers, you'll see that that's the car that Walter was talking about.

They came out with the Falcon in '61, I believe it was. That was a good-selling car. Then they came out with the Comet and that was a good-selling car. American people weren't ready for a small car. It's pretty much like it is today. You get fairly good gas usage and it's at cheaper prices and so everybody wants that big car, to be comfortable in and to do what they want. When you have the scare, like you had in '73 and '79, and the oil embargoes and [unintelligible], they have a tendency to go to a small car to get bigger mileage. Right now, I think, two of your better sellers in Ford Motor Company are the Lincoln and the Mercury Grand Marquis and the Crown Victoria. These are all big cars, although they're selling plenty of Escorts and the other cars too, but the fact is that at that time, Walter was looking at it on the basis of economy, because he wanted to have a car that people can afford to have and because the wage scale was not as great as it is today. Facts and events have made him completely right.

RUGGLES: He seemed to be far-sighted in a lot of areas. That was one of them.

FORCHIONE: He and Ken Bannon and other leaders of this union, we've been blessed by having leadership that didn't just look for the moment. They have looked down the road. The recent passing of Nat Weinberg in Washington, who was then the director of Social Security in this building . . . Between him and Ken and Walter and Ford Motor Company, they sort of drafted the SUB program as it is, which we've built on over the years, which has been a godsend for laid-off workers for that period of time.

RUGGLES: I want to ask you a little sensitive question now, if I might. In

1968, there was an election in Region 2 between Mr. Casstevens, Mr. David and Mr. Forchione. Can we discuss the controversy surrounding that? There was one election with a runoff and there seemed to be an awful lot of friction or bitterness engendered between the different locals.

FORCHIONE: Well, I think in any election — I don't know if it's any different when the changing of the guard takes place in Region 2 as opposed to what would be the changing of the guard taking place in some of the other more militant regions . . . I was the selection of the staff of Cleveland to be their candidate. Casstevens was on the staff and chose to run outside of the staff selection group. Bob David was the president of the largest local in the region. You know, everybody has the right to run for the office. We thought we had the votes and we went ahead with the election.

The way the process works, when you have an election like that in the region, if there's more than two candidates, unless somebody achieves a majority on the first ballot, the candidate who has the lowest amount of votes drops out and then he throws his support to whoever he chooses, or it might be divided. In this particular case it happened to be a solid vote and it came to me and it gave me the election. The rancor came between me and Casstevens as individuals rather than over what was happening as far as the election process was concerned. The locals pretty much divided themselves along loyalty lines: GM locals on one side and Ford locals on the other side and independents sort of caught in the middle. That became a controversial thing. In the next election in 1970, he beat me by a few votes. So, that just sort of worked itself out.

RUGGLES: There seemed to be some animosity or friction created because of your shifting the international reps to different assignments?

FORCHIONE: I made the assignments based upon basically where I thought . . . We were trying to stabilize the region after an election. You're not going to leave somebody in an assignment where he's going to continue to agitate the local union opposed to the region. So, when he continued to do that, I moved him from that assignment into an assignment where he might be more controlled. There was no rupture of loyalties. It became a controversial issue and we had a number of discussions with the international union. Nobody tried to force me to change the assignments back again. But that became an issue in the next election.

RUGGLES: There was Casstevens, Sparks and Trotter, was it?

FORCHIONE: Troder.

RUGGLES: Troder. They were all reps and they were objecting to their assignments. Mazey backed you, didn't he?

FORCHIONE: Yes. And so did Walter. Unfortunately, by 26 votes, I couldn't carry through the thing for them.

RUGGLES: So, you were regional director for two years. Were you able to calm things down and make some progress in the region?

FORCHIONE: Yes, we made progress. At that period of time, the international union had withdrawn from the AFL-CIO. We had a number of new programs that, as an independent union, we had to put into place. They were time-consuming. I think if you check the records of 1968 and 1969, the amount of executive board meetings that we had were rather regular. More than you would normally have, because we were setting up the new Community Action Program, trying to get that off the ground so we would have a political arm of our own rather than depending on C.O.P.E., which was the national

organization at that time. We made progress in the negotiations which occurred in the local union. We made progress in the organizing of the various new plants in the region, and so forth.

The political differences on an individual basis remained pretty much constant throughout. It was a stormy political fight and it remains a political fight. It wasn't connected to doing the job for the membership, or anything of that nature; it just remained a political fight between individuals. And of course the newspapers didn't leave it alone; every time somebody made a statement, there was a political blurb in the paper, and it kept it living all the time. But there were many things that we had to do at that time and I was tied up in a lot of issues and couldn't be in certain locations at certain times and they took advantage of it and made criticisms of the fact that I wasn't at a particular meeting, or things of that nature, which is all a game of politics. They played a better political game than I played is really what it amounts to.

RUGGLES: You had succeeded a man who had been in office for almost twenty years: Pat O'Malley. Was that a tough thing to do, to take over a region that had been run by one man for so many years?

FORCHIONE: Well, that's one of the problems. Pat O'Malley was a very dear friend of mine. I'd known Pat ever since I'd been involved in the UAW. I always felt that he was a friend, not only as my immediate superior, so to speak, when I was in the Cleveland area, but also as an individual. Pat had a way about him — he could talk to somebody that was opposed to him and before they were done with a conversation, they could put everything to bed, even though they still opposed each other. When you're in office as long as Pat was, you could do those kind of things. When you first started out,

just like when he first started out, there were all kinds of political complications. When anybody starts off on any of those jobs, it's a powerful job and it's a job that people are working to get into as a means of putting themselves up the ladder. If you don't play your politics right, you're going to lose it. And that's basically what happened to me. I tried to do it more by doing what I thought was the right thing to do, rather than do the political end of it. Some of that got me in trouble and I was just stubborn enough that I kept with it.

RUGGLES: Can you give me some examples of your actions?

FORCHIONE: In political circles, you can make accommodations to do certain things. For instance, I could have gone to Casstevens after the first election and said to him, "OK, let's put this thing to bed. I'll make you my assistant and we'll go from there," and I think that would have resolved it. I just happened to think that I had a person that was better qualified to be the assistant and I chose him instead of trying to make the political accommodation.

Even going into the second election, we had the votes that were committed to us; it's just that some individuals changed their minds at the last minute and voted the other way. I could have made some political accommodations by promising jobs or things of that nature in that second election. I chose not to do that because we had counted the votes and we thought the votes were sufficient to win without having to do anything that we were opposed to doing. If we would have won the second election, chances are things would have smoothed out. It was just one of those things — when a person walks up to a microphone with your jacket on, with your advertisement on his back and he votes the other way, there's not much you can do about that, you know.

RUGGLES: Looking back, would you do it any differently?

FORCHIONE: I don't think so. I shave myself every morning and never have an urge to cut my throat. Some of the people that were involved at that time have came to me and said they made a mistake. Two or three of the individuals that voted the other way have come up and publicly have said to people that they screwed me because of political reasons and if they had it to do again, they wouldn't do it that way. You know, you always take a second look at that kind of a person when it comes time to get a vote, because you don't know where he's going to stand; if his word wasn't good that first time, his word isn't good the second time. You have to make him prove himself.

RUGGLES: In 1970, when Casstevens became the director, he then switched you around, didn't he?

FORCHIONE: Yes. When I was a servicing rep, I serviced the Lorain Ford plant and the Cleveland engine foundry plant and the parts depot and the Cleveland stamping plant, which probably represented twenty-three or twenty-four thousand people at that time. He gave me the assignment of about six plants that had maybe a total population in them of two hundred in all six plants. What he had complained that I had done to him in 1968, he did the same thing. I don't know if he did it as turnabout-is-fair-play or if he did it for the same reasons that I did it, because I've never discussed it with him. So I don't know why he did it.

RUGGLES: Does the rivalry still continue today?

FORCHIONE: There's nothing to be a rival about. He's an officer of the international union and I have no possibility of becoming an officer of the international union. If you're saying personally, does the personal rivalry still exist, I think so. I don't

think you ever forget those kind of things.

RUGGLES: In 1970, I'm not sure if it's just before or just after you leave office as regional director, the UAW Family Education Center is established up at Black Lake. Did the workers support the establishment of that center?

FORCHIONE: I think the delegates at the convention in '68 who'd seen the model of what was there did. In '70 it was dedicated; it had already been built. They started building it in late '67 or early '68. It was the dedication that took place after I had left office in 1970. For what Walter dreamed about doing up there, it was an ideal place. Now, many people don't like to go to Black Lake. I happen to be one of the people that like Black Lake, because of its solitude and its camaraderie with people that are there for meetings. You have an opportunity to talk to people about things that you normally wouldn't get into in great detail, because there's more leisure time. That was the whole idea of Black Lake, to give local union leaders the opportunity to blossom and the opportunity to sit down with officers who might be there and the opportunity to sit down with other leaders that were at the center. If you go to Black Lake, you'll find the way that it's set up, you can walk through certain areas and there will be benches to sit down. The whole idea is that you can walk through, no cars. You walk through the buildings and there will be areas where you can sit down and have conversations, little bull sessions, and so forth. I think Black Lake is a great place.

Now, the young people who have had the opportunity to go through on the scholarship program and take their families up there with them all speak very highly of it. Many people have never been there yet. They don't know what it's all about up there. But I've never heard any great hue and cry about why we have Black Lake or anything

else. You had some of that back in the seventies, when we had the strike at General Motors that created the financial hardship and we had to mortgage this up to the hilt. Some said get rid of Black Lake, because we had some officers that didn't think that Black Lake should have been built. They thought it should have been built some other place. Walter's idea of taking it up where he took it was to get it away from the telephones and get it away from everything else. You go to a resort area or someplace else, have a meeting, you have ninety-nine phone calls every time you start a meeting and you never get the opportunity to really go for what you're there for. I think the purpose of Black Lake, what it was established for, has been very successful.

RUGGLES: It's a beautiful spot. There were some complaints, I think, in the late sixties that it was being planned with a tremendous outlay of money. Twenty million dollars or some figure like that. I suppose it's natural.

FORCHIONE: The thing that happened, we were paying for Black Lake as we went, and then in the executive board meetings that took place, I think in '69, they amortized it over a period of time, instead of paying for it out of revenue. They amortized it over a period of time so that the burden of paying for Black Lake was not coming out of the general treasury, right off the bat. This can be very expensive when you take students up there and you're subsidizing the food — you don't charge what they charge in a resort or a hotel, and the food is part of the hotel charge.

Then the workers organized at Black Lake and they had a fairly lucrative contract in many respects, benefits equal to General Motors, which were negotiated, by the way, by the present president of this international union, who was an international representative at that time. It's much different than what you have at a regular hotel

resort area, where they pay a minimum wage or much less. But the growing pains we went through at Black Lake I think have all been overcome and I think it's well worth its being.

RUGGLES: Let's go back to your period when you were regional director. You were director of Region 2 and you also had the opportunity at that time to sit on the International Executive Board. Did you see the UAW from an entirely different perspective at this point, once you got at this level and dealt with the . . .

FORCHIONE: I don't think it's that much of a change. You go in as a new regional director and you're sort of apprehensive as to how you should conduct yourself. You're going to be talking about very lofty things. When you get there, you're talking about the same things you're talking about at the local union level: how to better this union. Where the local union might be talking about how to better the local contract, we're talking about how to better the national agreement. The problems that are facing the local on finances are the same problems that face the international union on finances, only on a different level. So you find that much of what occurs at the international level (except for the responsibility, which is greater, of course) is pretty much what you've been going through all the time that you've been involved with the union.

RUGGLES: Can you describe how the executive board at the international level operated? Did you go around the table with problems or was there an agenda?

FORCHIONE: Well, there was an agenda at each meeting in which items . . . A regional director might have a particular problem. You might have a problem with a local union, you might have a problem with a particular individual, or it might be charges filed, whatever the case may be. Prior to the executive board meeting, everything is

assigned an agenda spot. When you come to the International Executive Board, there's an agenda that's presented and your particular item, say you had a local that you wanted to put under administratorship, that particular item was given an agenda number and when you got to that point in the agenda, then you made your presentation as to why you thought that some action should be taken about what was happening in the local union. Then you go through the normal procedure of the show-cause hearing and so forth and have the local union leadership in or whatever the case may be.

In the original discussion you might just inform the board as to why you might be thinking this line. Everything is discussed then. Each individual can speak on any item that comes up on the agenda. If they're dealing with the problems that are facing individual directors, they're dealing with new programs, new ideas of what they should be having as far as international services are concerned. It might be that they want to add staff people in a particular department or change the way we've been doing something. Those are all discussions on the board that take place on a sort of regulated basis, based upon the problem that has come up. But I don't think it operates any differently than what you do on the local union level. The local union might want to do something one way, and the international union has to look at what effect it has on all three thousand locals throughout the country. You may have to say to one local, "You can't do that, because that's the wrong way to go about it."

RUGGLES: I wanted to ask you next about Walter Reuther himself. It was just toward the end of your period as a board member that Walter died. He's been called everything from a saint to an SOB in the books and records. Some people have described

the executive board members as feeling that whatever Walter wanted, Walter got. Is that a fair or an unfair comment to make?

FORCHIONE: Well, I don't know if you can make any comment that whatever he wanted, he got. There were plenty of arguments, even in the short period of time that I was on the board. There were plenty of disagreements as to how you should go about something. Walter was very persuasive. And time has proved him very right in most of the things that he talked about.

He had a vision as to what he thought this union should be about: it should not just be about the problems of the plants, but about the problems of the communities and problems of people in general, regardless of whether or not they were in the plant or they were living at home. He believed they should have low-cost housing. We discussed, in '68, the possibility of the UAW building low-cost housing right over here by the Chrysler plant as a means of trying to get in there.

You know he was involved in New Detroit and very actively involved in the civil rights movement. And I'm one of the people who happen to think of him as a saint rather than as an SOB. I would assume that the company people are the ones that referred to him as the SOB. But I've never heard anybody in this union, other than political things at the conventions and things of that nature, that accused Walter of that.

The man lived a life that is just exemplary as you could live, dedicating himself to people. And material things were not that important to him. And he lived modestly and his salary was modest. And Walter used to have a saying that if you want to make big bucks, you go work for the company, don't work for us because you're not going to make big bucks here. You're going to make a living and that's it.

And Walter wasn't the only one that was a far-reaching thinker at the time. You had people like Ken Bannon, who was probably as perceptive of what the needs of the workers were as anybody, Doug Fraser, who later succeeded Walter, and Leonard Woodcock. You know, Leonard and Doug and Ken Bannon were all in the original group that supported Walter and so you had a continuation of the same type of philosophy of what the labor union should be about.

Emil Mazey was a worker's worker to the day he died. In fact, I went up to visit Emil about three days before he died and here he is in the hospital dying of cancer and he was meeting with some people as I walked into his room and he asked me to step outside for a few minutes. So I was standing in the hall with another friend of mine from Solidarity House that had gone up to visit him. And Emil is giving the hospital administrators holy hell because one of the attendants at the Detroit Metropolitan Hospital had refused to push a wheelchair out to the car because it was raining. And the guy had to take his wife out in the wheelchair himself and get her in the car and then bring the chair back in the rain and so forth, instead of the attendant. And Emil was just laying it on them. It was our hospital and he better straighten these crews out and if that guy don't want to work at this hospital and serve people . . . But that was Emil.

But we were blessed with most of the people. Over the course of the history of the UAW, you don't have anybody that was out trying to sort of make a name for himself at the expense of anybody else. The leadership that was there when I came up in the union and the leadership that's here now is working as a group to better people's lives. And I'm not just trying to put icing on the cake. I truly believe that that's the way it has operated over the years. And I think a lot of it is the influence of Walter.

RUGGLES: You worked especially closely with Ken Bannon because he was in the Ford Department for so many years.

FORCHIONE: Right.

RUGGLES: Give me a little character sketch of Ken.

FORCHIONE: I think the best thing you can say about Ken is that he is probably the most innovative, quick mind that you've ever seen around. He could think of more new ways to do something. And because of the years that he had spent at Ford, he knew everything. There wasn't anything that you could hide from Ken and say, well, I don't want to bring this problem to him. He would be at a meeting someplace and somebody would mention something about it and he knew what was going on. He would come back and maybe give the staff member hell for not having told him that he had that problem. But it wasn't because he got caught unawares or anything. He knew the problems that were going on and where they were going on and how serious they were, whether they were bullshit problems or whatever.

In my opinion, Ken Bannon was one of the people that made this union tick. He was never a person who stood as a roadblock to anything. He was always right in the forefront of what you were trying to do. But many of the things that happened over the years that other people got credit fo,r Ken did.

And of course, that happens in a big organization. It's not something that was done deliberately or anything else. For many years, Ken was not an officer of this union. He was a director of the department appointed by Walter Reuther. He was one of the first appointments that Walter made after he solidified the leadership of this union. He made

him director of the Ford Department, but he didn't have board status. He wasn't on the International Executive Board.

Many of the things that were discussed by people on the executive board were things that Ken had thought about and designed and advanced to them or advanced through Walter, whatever the case may be. But not being on the executive board, he didn't get the publicity of having said that or did that. But I think the record of Ford negotiations and the amount of new programs and first programs that were established at Ford pretty much speak for what Ken stood for and what he was.

RUGGLES: SUB plan, was that his?

FORCHIONE: SUB was his. Pension was his. Retiree health insurance. The improvements in the retirement program. Well, we had one of the first programs of a full-time committee, you know, the full-time union representative. Those were all items of his.

He led the fight, in 1947 I believe it was, '46 or '47, when Ford Motor Company put out a pension program and a stock program, because they weren't adequate. And then when he took over the directorship of the Ford Department, one of the first things he did was establish a good, sound pension program, which was followed, then, by the other corporations. You know, he established the pension. But if you had taken the pension program or the stock program that were offered during this period of time, they would have been very inadequate for our members.

He was an individual that knew everything about what was going on around him. It's a rare gift to be able to hear just a small amount of a problem and know where to push

the buttons to correct it or to tell a guy that you don't really have a problem. And it was because of his knowledge of the overall Ford Department function.

RUGGLES: He was quite an idea-man?

FORCHIONE: I always thought he was.

RUGGLES: Were some of the ideas that Walter proposed actually Bannon's?

FORCHIONE: In some respects. You know, maybe somebody raised a thought and Ken might have worked on the mechanics. Or he might have raised the thought and somebody else worked on the mechanics or they might have worked on it together. Things of that nature. During the period of time that Ken was working with Walter, I don't think that you can separate how they were thinking, because they thought a lot alike. Ken was one of the first supporters of Walter and Walter made Ken the Ford director, not because he was a supporter, but because he was the best guy for the job at the time.

And of course, Ken was the director of this department for 32 years. So, you know, over that 32-year period, you know where you can push and where you can't push. And you know where you can make gains and you know how far you can go without causing a complete problem. Ken was that kind of a guy, very perceptive. He was well liked by the membership, because he was not afraid to go before the membership on an unpopular issue and nine times out of ten, he would come away from the membership with them having a better understanding of things.

RUGGLES: Can you think of an unpopular issue where he did this?

FORCHIONE: Yeah. I think a good example was in 1979. Budd had for years done the body die work for the Thunderbird. And as less and less tool and die work was

available for Ford workers at the Rouge plant, there was a big move on to take all the Ford work away from the suppliers and bring it back in-house. Ken had no objections, of course, to bringing Ford work back that was outside of Ford facilities and in non-union facilities. But where it was in a UAW plant and it would have meant dislocating a UAW member in some other location just so you could work overtime at Ford, he wouldn't do that. He went before the tool and die membership and explained why the position was that way, why the job didn't get moved. It stayed at Budd.

We moved it later on, in '81 and '82, because so much work had been taken completely out of Ford and we had to do something. You know, at one time we had about 207,000 Ford workers. And at the time of the '82 negotiations, we were down to 104,000. So you almost had half of the work force between '78 and '82 disappearing. And you had about 60,000 of those that lost seniority, their recall rights back to Ford Motor Company. And so you did have some different problems at different times.

But in '73, when the skilled tradesmen turned on the contract because of their particular items, Ken was not hesitant about going before any membership where they were talking about that. But he went back in and negotiated some changes in the agreement and then he brought it back out and that was satisfactory.

RUGGLES: You were especially close to Emil Mazey, also. At least, he gave you a lot of support in that '68 election.

FORCHIONE: Well, I think Emil Mazey is probably, as I said to you, the worker's worker. He never lost the fact that he represented people. He made a staff member feel great. Emil knew every staff member by name and knew somebody's family and talked to that guy when he'd see him. He might not have seen him for two or three

years and when he saw that guy, he'd ask how his wife was, by name. He was the kind of a guy who was always looking out for people. He wasn't always unavailable. He was available all the time.

You have to admire his courage and the fact that in his last few years, Emil had some very heavy physical problems. They thought he wouldn't walk again and he said he was going to walk. You saw him pushing himself to walk with a carrier and then walk with a cane and then put a brace on his leg and walk without the cane. So you had to admire a person that way.

He was always one of my favorite people. You could always go to him with a problem. You could always get a straight answer. If you had a particular problem, why, you'd always get a straight answer from him. And Emil was the representative of the board that was designated by the board to come to Cleveland to assist me, because I was part of the board caucus. And he did. And he never wavered.

RUGGLES: In the '68 period?

FORCHIONE: In '68 and the '70 period. And the '68 period, they put a hands-off position on, when the first election took place. But then after I was elected, Emil, of course, supported me. But in the actual election in '68, nobody was supposed to take a position. It was supposed to be a free election in the region. And that's pretty much where it was, although people did take positions, as they normally do, you know.

RUGGLES: How did he help you? What did he do?

FORCHIONE: Well, advice. I'm sure that he talked to many people that he knew personally, and explained to them why he thought I should be elected rather than the other. He openly came to meetings and he gave his support. You know, it just wasn't

in the cards, like I said to you. The first election, we didn't put out anything. We didn't put out a jacket, we didn't put out a hat or anything else, and we won the election. The second election, we put out jackets, and when people go up to the microphone with your jacket on and vote the opposite way, you know, it's unexplainable. A lot of rumors have taken place as to why and how people did that. They deny it. You know, it's one of the things you never really find out what happened.

RUGGLES: In 1970, Walter and his wife and four other people died in that plane crash up at Pellston. Do you recall your reaction?

FORCHIONE: Total shock. I think that period of time, when Walter's body laid in state and the services were held here in the Detroit area, you were sort of numb. I attended my first convention in 1950 and I listened to Walter begin his speech and I happened to be sitting at a table with one of these people you referred to as a left-wing, Communist-type person. The man continually made comments and I was trying to listen to Walter and every time Walter would say something, this man said, "Oh, he don't know what he's talking about, he's a no-good son of a bitch, he's this, he's that." And I finally got up and said, "Shut up, I want to hear this guy speak." And he started arguing and we almost got in a fist fight over listening to Walter speak at that convention.

But he was always an idol. He was always in the forefront of things that you believed in. He believed in people, and he tried to do everything he could for people. And he surrounded himself with people that did this, that had the same type of thinking. I think that's one of the things that made the UAW the way it is.

RUGGLES: There was probably a great deal of concern right after his death about the possible turmoil or confusion at the executive board level, who would replace him or who would be jockeying for position. You were there.

FORCHIONE: Well, I was there, but I was not there for the vote. The election had already taken place. I probably would not have voted the way it turned out to be. I would probably have voted for Doug Fraser.

RUGGLES: Can you tell me why?

FORCHIONE: Well, part of it was the fact that Leonard Woodcock supported Casstevens against me, but I don't think that was a major thing. I just happened to think that Doug Fraser was the second coming of Walter Reuther, although he's got a different type of charisma, as far as meeting the public is concerned. I think Walter had that. I think people were in awe of Walter. Where with Doug, it's more, hey, let's have a beer. Let's talk about it. Doug was more down-to-earth in his approach. But I just happen to think that Doug was a very qualified guy and as time proved it, he was.

RUGGLES: You spent so much of your life trying to improve work standards, I imagine that when the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 was passed, you must have felt awfully gratified about that.

FORCHIONE: Well, you're gratified when they finally give recognition to it and then you start to see some changes take place. And then, before it really gets a chance to take place, it gets flattened out. In fact, one of the people from the UAW Health and Safety Department was on the staff of OSHA and so you knew somebody that you could call if you had a problem. Under the Carter administration, that started out to be a good program, though they still didn't have enough people out there to do the

investigating. But it's been decimated, as you well know, right now. You wouldn't have the condition that you have today of the imports taking over so much of this country if you had those kind of programs where you set standards or industrial policies.

RUGGLES: In what way do you think it has been decimated?

FORCHIONE: Well, they don't enforce it. There aren't enough inspectors to make the investigations. And the way it started, you could have an OSHA investigation in there and you could accompany the investigator around, in order to be able to tell him what was going on. Now, you know, they can come in by themselves or they can take somebody's report. And it's not an effective means of insuring health and safety.

I'm very happy we've still maintained our right to strike on health and safety issues under the Ford agreement, because although we haven't had to use it in recent years, there were many times that we did, even while OSHA was in effect.

RUGGLES: In the same period, in the early 70's, the skilled trades issue became an issue again in the '73 contract and the skilled tradesmen rebelled in the UAW. In fact, didn't they picket Solidarity House here at one time?

FORCHIONE: Well, they picketed. They turned on the contract in '73. There were some rumors in '73 as to a secret letter. And there was a secret letter on the skilled trades overtime and it was discussed and those things were corrected. We had a special meeting in Cincinnati of the skilled trades leadership of the Ford locals. And it was openly discussed there as to what the problems were. And then they came back and renegotiated some parts of the agreement that satisfied them and then it was ratified.

But then we had a touch of it again in '76, when some people were trying to rehash the problems of '73, but it never got off the ground, although the normal groups

that opposed the contract — and you can look back over the contracts over the years and you'll find it's pretty much the same group — they started opposing the contract even before the contract was negotiated. Then they build their political ideas upon those things that they knew when they originally were proposed were not going to become contractual items. What you have to do is get out the membership. And thank God the membership over the years, when they receive the leaflets from the opposing groups, they haven't listened. The fact is, pension, SUB, all of them were opposed by the same group of people that are opposing portions of the contract today.

RUGGLES: It's a political group?

FORCHIONE: Sure, it's a political group.

RUGGLES: It's not just a skilled trades issue?

FORCHIONE: The skilled trades formed a group to talk about skilled trades issues. But I think some of the people that have controlled that group have made it a political thing rather than an issue group, you know.

RUGGLES: Do they have a name? Have they organized into a . . .?

FORCHIONE: Well, they've called themselves a number of different things at different times. It's Skilled Trades, International Skilled Trades Conference, all kinds of names that they attach to themselves. But if you look at the faces, the faces are always the same. You can almost pick them out at the convention, when they hit the floor, you know which one is going to speak on which item. The Pete Kellys and the Al Gardners, you know, they'll pop up in opposition before they even know what's in the agreement. Hell, before we explained the agreement the last time, some of the people were popping

up on the floor and opposing the agreement. They didn't know what was in the damned agreement, but they were opposed to it. And their memberships passed the agreement.

We've had some occasions, like in '73, when the Tool and Die Unit of Rouge turned down the agreement. And some people thought maybe that's a political mistake, letting Local 600, as large as it is, vote first and influence votes throughout the country. But we've done it the same way over the years and most of the time, it turns out right.

RUGGLES: Did you have a hand in the '76 negotiations dealing with the shortened work week? Ken was involved in that.

FORCHIONE: Yeah, I was the administrative assistant during those negotiations and Howard Young and Ken and myself were the committee for the short work week, the original short work week committee.

RUGGLES: You gained 12 additional days off, paid days off.

FORCHIONE: Yes. You know, the dream of our union has always been a four-day work week at 40 hours pay at least and not having the worker at the beck and call of the company. And over the years, the issue has been voluntary overtime. Ask us to work the overtime, don't tell us we have to work, don't make it mandatory for us to work the overtime. And we need more time off from the shop, because the companies keep working six, seven days a week, 12 hours a day when they need it and then they lay off when they don't need it.

It was another way to position ourselves where we could get a four-day work week, eventually, and it began to work that way, until the economy changed starting in ’79-'80. The short work week was a very popular program with the workers, who could have a designated day off, and it reduced absenteeism, which was one of the problems

that were facing the companies. If a person knew he was going to have a day off on a certain day so that he could take care of some business, then he didn't take another day off in order to do that. But it is costly and that became part of the problem in '82.

RUGGLES: You became an international rep after you left the directorship. Where did you go as international rep?

FORCHIONE: Well, I went back to my old assignment there in Cleveland. As I mentioned before, when Casstevens took over my assignments were changed. I was given some minor assignments, but I carried those assignments out, I think, to the best of my ability in negotiating for those small plants, even though some of the plants only had four people in it, and so forth.

But I was on very limited assignment in the Cleveland area and then in 1973, Ken asked me to go on special assignment for him. So I became, again, a member of the national Ford staff as an international representative and handled specialized arbitration. He had me check on wage rates between the glass industry and our industry and a number of other items that he was putting me on special assignment for. But what he was really doing, as you look back over it, was getting me back into the servicing of the Ford workers and I'm very happy that he did that. But for a year I worked for Ken out of my home in Ohio and then I came up here in 1974 as his administrative assistant.

RUGGLES: You've been an administrative assistant, now, for three different men: Bannon, Ephlin and . . .

FORCHIONE: . . . and Yokich.

RUGGLES: That was in the Ford Department?

FORCHIONE: Right.

RUGGLES: And what are your duties now as administrative assistant?

FORCHIONE: Well, as administrative assistant you function as an arm of the vice president, and whatever assignment he chooses to give you, that's what you're doing. And you're involved in negotiations. You're involved in problems. You're involved in responses to communications the department reads. You're involved with legal matters. There are a number of lawsuits that are filed each year. You're involved in United Foundation. You're involved in preparations for various types of meetings. You're involved in the national council meetings. There are no set duties; they're varied depending on what problem is coming up at that time.

RUGGLES: I've been impressed with the tremendous reaching out that UAW directors do, going beyond just the special interests of the UAW, in community action programs and issues that, on a national level, perhaps don't directly relate to the union. Do you recall writing letters about the grape boycott back in the late 60's?

FORCHIONE: Sure. Sure.

RUGGLES: It's that kind of thing that is impressive to see a UAW member be involved in.

FORCHIONE: Well, we not only wrote the letters on the grape boycott, but we went to California and helped them picket. In fact, I've still got the hat at home that they presented to us out there, the big straw hat that they were wearing. Like I said, I'm a pack rat. I never throw anything away.

RUGGLES: And you were involved in the Voting Rights Act of 1965?

FORCHIONE: Sure.

RUGGLES: I see a telegram here that you sent President Nixon, in fact.

FORCHIONE: Yes.

RUGGLES: With copies to Mansfield, Dirksen, John McCormack and all of those people. And, of course, the UAW has been, since the early 40's, involved in civil rights.

FORCHIONE: Well, as I said to you before, I think that's one of the things that's made the UAW more than just a labor union. In Walter's dream, it was not only the fact that you had to do what you had to do to correct problems in the work place, but you had to be active in the community in which you lived. You had to support those things that are morally right for us to do. It's not just all for us and the hell with everybody else. I think it was '61 or '64 that Walter proposed that we'd have no wage increases, provided the companies would cut the price of the car a certain amount. Some people said that was a publicity stunt, but had the company done it, that would have been the agreement.

The letters that are in the file that we've written various companies over the years about quality and how we want to sit down and work with them on quality, and we were told that it's none of your damn business. Now this cooperation is part of the agreement, put there by necessity, rather than because the companies have changed their line, in my opinion.

But starting with the '82 agreement, there was a lot of jointness in doing things and they've found out that it's successful doing it that way, when you reduce the amount of quality problems by 60 percent. It used to be that if they could get the car out of the plant, they sold it. Well, you just don't do that anymore. And they have special surveys made for how customers react to the cars and how many problems they have.

They're still not where they should be in treatment of the customers. But we've discussed that with them a number of times, about the reluctance of dealers to correct the problem the first time the car goes in the garage, rather than have the customer bring it back four, five times for the same item. Once the consumer has bought that car, we really don't have any control over him. And we're not looking for any control over him, but we're concerned that the worker is getting blamed for the quality problem, when he doesn't have anything to do with it.

Some people relate all these recalls to worker problems. And they're not worker problems. Those are engineering problems. The recalls are mainly based upon what they've designed to put in the car. The worker puts that part into the car. It may not be designed correctly. We've had a number of recalls, but you don't see a recall made because the paint isn't right or something of that nature. If you go through the city of Detroit and look at any '76 or '77 Ford or Mercury that was painted silver gray, you'll see the paint has peeled off of it. The reason it peeled off is because they used a bad quality paint. It's not because the worker didn't paint it right. And they finally admitted that there was a pigment missing out of the paint, but they've never recalled those cars to repaint them. You know, we talked to the company about correcting those kind of problems and dealer attitude and so forth.

It used to be that the dealer was controlled by the company that they sold cars for. They're no longer controlled that way. They're independent businessmen. So now they have a Ford product in one room and they have a Japanese product in another room and a German product in the other room. And they say they don't care which one of them you buy as long as you buy one of these three cars. And if it means them saying that that

German car, that Japanese car has got a better paint job on it than the American car, even though they know better — they're probably done by the same type of paint machine and everything else — they'll do that in order to sell the car.

RUGGLES: Okay. Let's digress for a moment. There's a group that seemed to be of some concern in the Detroit area, at least in the mid 70's, the Workers Action Movement, called WAM. They were very radical. They were very disillusioned with the UAW leadership. And they apparently were attempting to enlist UAW members in their cause. They might have been Communist-influenced and I just wonder if you ever heard of WAM?

FORCHIONE: Oh, we've heard of WAM, and DRUM and CRUM and FRUM and many thought it was a Maoist influence. It is and was a radical group that really didn't speak for the workers, but picked out certain items that might appeal to workers and made an issue out of those items, trying to gain notoriety. But it's pretty much faded from most of the plants.

I think it started at Chrysler, at the Dodge Main plant. I think the first one was DRUM. Then they moved to Chrysler and it became CRUM and they moved to Ford and became FRUM and WAM and BAM — they took initials from the plant that they happened to be located in and added Action Movement to it or United Movement to it, whatever the feeling was at that time.

But it's like any other radical group. They'll grab a particular item. There might be 300 items that are there for discussion. And they'll grab a particular item that might appeal to somebody and try to run with it. But it's a political activist group and if you look at their support groups, most of the support groups that they have either end up

running for Congress on the Communist slate or the socialist slate. Those kind of groups are always going to be around, I guess. Thank God the membership is smart enough to see through them.

RUGGLES: In the last Ford contract -—1983 was it?

FORCHIONE: '84.

RUGGLES: You must have been deeply involved in that. Can we discuss that last '84 contract, the moratorium on plant closings, things of that sort?

FORCHIONE: We had a moratorium in the '82 contract. It lasted only for 24 months. And we figured, well, we were opening a contract nine months early, so you went 24. In '84, we put the moratorium up for the life of the contract and we added some things in there, the PEP program, which is a Protective Employee Program for people who get laid off because of outsourcing of work and things of that nature. In the '82 agreement we also had outsourcing language. We made it a little stronger in the '84 agreement. We made the other programs stronger. And we lengthened the period of time in which they can't close a plant down.

But those are all items dealing with job security, trying to find a way to work within the system to create job security for our people. At the same time, we were not able to correct the problems that are outside of the collective bargaining issue, the trade imbalance, and the governmental actions dealing with the trade imbalance, governmental actions dealing with CAFE, the fuel consumption.

You're trying to create a balance, so that when a worker goes to work for a company, that that worker is going to be secure that his work is not going to be given away. Of course, it's a constant fight. It's something that's going to have to be looked at

always. Even under this agreement, they are allowed to outsource, but they pay a penalty by having to put that person in the PEP program. If they outsource it to a foreign competitor or it's a violation of that agreement, then they have to continue to pay that worker his wages. So that's an extra burden on them, so they're very careful on that. That's why we only have 200 people in the PEP bank right now nationwide, because they have been more careful about what they outsource. Before, they cared nothing about whether they outsourced or not. If they could get it done cheaper, then they'd just ship the whole job out. And people were laid off. So that's a little control. It's not yet where it should be, but it's some.

RUGGLES: Were there any other outstanding features of the new contract?

FORCHIONE: Yeah, I think we've made up some ground where we had lost some before on wages, even though we went through a different formula. We protected the cost of living and we went to a percentage-type or performance-type bonus arrangement that doesn't increase the hourly labor cost. It's a one-time payment, rather than a continuing payment. Improved the pension. Improved the medical program.

RUGGLES: Is there profit sharing?

FORCHIONE: Profit sharing was there in the '82 agreement, but the amount that was paid out in '84 was considerably different because of the profits. We made some improvements on that. We also added another program, an employee stock program that the salaried people had that hourly people did not have, in which they can save money in three or four different types of programs and put their profit sharing checks right into a stock savings program or money market or something. Now they can save 1 to 6 percent of the wages in either a money . . . [end of tape]

RUGGLES: We were talking about the new contract and the investments.

FORCHIONE: Well, with the new investment programs, he's entitled to save his money in four different ways. Of course, he has to leave it in there for long periods of time, but he can borrow from the account, because they have a loan feature in the account. And when he gets it on a loan feature, he pays himself back. He pays the principal and the interest back to his own account, so he's not losing any money over that period of time, but that's money still available to him. And of course, it's based upon the amount that he has in the account and everything else. But he has an additional thing to add to his retirement when he's ready to leave the company.

RUGGLES: In some of the earlier years, in the early 60's, when profit sharing first came in, I think it was at Chrysler, the worker didn't accept it too readily, because he didn't get cash in hand. It was invested and he couldn't see it.

FORCHIONE: Well, I think '55 was the first year they put out a stock plan. They put out a stock plan way back. In fact, Henry Ford had profit sharing, what they called profit sharing, back as far as 1915. And when we get done with this interview, I'll give you a copy of that. But the profit sharing plan that was proposed, if I recall, was '55. It called for that person to save X dollars by buying stock. And they would put their money in for three years. It was a five-year program. But only their money would appear in the program for the three-year period.

And then beginning with the first month of the fourth year, the company would make a small contribution. I think that we actually figured it out that at the beginning of the fourth year, after they've had your money for three years, investing it how they wanted, that you would realize 12 cents in the beginning of the fourth year. By the end of

the fifth year, they would be matching the amount of stock. But they would do that on a gradual basis from the beginning of the fourth year all the way to the end of the contract. And by the time it ended up, they ended up putting in half what you did. And if you left the company, all you got was the three years, plus the minimal payment. You never got the full value of the stock. And that's why it was opposed in '55.

They can buy stock now, but when they buy the stock, there's no matching funds from the company at the present time. Under the salary program, there's still a small matching amount. That's 60 percent of the first ten percent that they save. And eventually, we'll have that, too. But we made the advance that now the guy can buy the stock and the investment is his. The interest is his. And his account becomes his account and it continues to grow.

Another feature of the '84 agreement was that nobody could lose their seniority. Under the previous agreements, once you achieved a layoff period of the same amount of time that you were working, you lost your right of recall back to the company. In '84, we put in the clause in the contract that says nobody that had recall rights at the beginning of that contract, regardless of the time, can lose his seniority during the life of the contract. So that added job security. So there's a hope of being called back to work.

And we've still got about 18,000 or 19,000 laid off at Ford and some will never get back to work, because Ford will never be the size that it once was. But at least there's a hope of being called back. Before they can hire a new person, that person has to be called back.

RUGGLES: Why won't Ford ever be the size that it was?

FORCHIONE: Well, I don't think any company in the United States, because of the share of the import market, is going to be the size that it was before. And a continual threat — the continuing threat of the Japanese dumping billions — you know, a United States corporation can dump millions of dollars into a new model and have Japan come in with the same model two months after they introduce it and undercut them. And that's one of the worries of the Aerostar van. There's $715 million tied up in the thing, but Toyota has already got a van over here.

And as long as our government doesn't protect the American worker . . . Every other country in the world protects their workers. Most of them have a limitation agreement. They can only bring in a percentage of the market. Some countries have a fixed amount — Italy, I think, allows them to bring 2500 cars in a year, period. France allows them 3 percent, Germany allows them 10 percent, and England allows them 10 percent. Other countries have a total embargo. And while we buy from those other countries, you know, Japan, Mexico, they're closed markets to us. We have to build a certain amount down there in order to be able to sell there. But we're the only country in the world that still allows our market to be ravaged by anybody that wants to come in and pick up a piece. So it's sort of an unfair situation. And I think people are getting more aware of that all the time.

RUGGLES: I see in this morning's newspaper that Ford Motor Company announced the possibility of a new department, something like the Saturn Division?

FORCHIONE: Well, in the '84 agreement, we negotiated what we call an Alpha Committee. And the Alpha is the Ford counterpart to Saturn. And what they will be

doing is looking for new ways to build a car, new innovations. And to try to compete in the market.

RUGGLES: I don't want to suggest that Ford is going to try to copy General Motors, but is Ford going to copy the Saturn plan?

FORCHIONE: No, not necessarily so. One of the things that's wrong with the way we do business in the United States is that each company has to do its own secretly; otherwise, they're in violation of the law. In Japan and in most of the foreign countries, hell, twenty companies can get together with the government, sit down and say, okay, here's the best way to do this. And the government says, okay, we'll build the robot and we'll do this and then you guys can buy them off of us and then you can copy them. There's no copyright problems or trust problems or anything of that nature. Here, they expend all kinds of money for the same thing. And each company spends millions of dollars to develop a certain item where, if it was a pooled information item, it would be a hell of a lot cheaper for all companies to have that one pool and then be able to use it.

The Alpha Project will be designed to be a Ford Motor Company product. I don't think they'll mimic General Motors. I don't think they've ever done that. But, you know, car companies follow car companies in types of cars and sizes of cars and number of cars and number of different models available and options available and everything else, to a certain degree. But I think it will be a car of their own. They've been working on a number of cars that they would like to put out on the street. They have them from two-passenger cars up to the ones they're putting in the papers this morning, the Strobe V, you know, which are very outlandish cars.

RUGGLES: Looking back on the 30-odd years that you've been active in the union, back to those days when those men on that wildcat strike were carrying guns and knives, did you ever think that you'd be sitting here at Solidarity House, negotiating such sophisticated things as this Alpha contract?

FORCHIONE: No. No, because when you started off, your only aim was to look right at what you were doing and what problem you were having right at that time. When I was a local union president, I could care less what's happening in Plant B or Plant C. I only cared about Plant A where I was. Look at the diversity of the plants that we have, from forging to assembly and glass and steel and the various different component parts that go into the car and every one of them is a different workplace, everyone's got a different problem in the workplace. It's not until you have the responsibility of trying to negotiate for numbers of people in different categories that you start looking at it on a national basis.

But overall, I've had a very happy time, because I'm satisfied with what I've been doing for the last 31 years. Actually, I worked with the company for 37 years, but 36 of them have been representing the union on a full-time basis, in one category or another, almost 36 of them. And I get teased about it by various Ford Motor Company people when I tell them. They say, "What did you ever do in the plant?" Well, I worked for a while as a snag grinder. I worked for while [unintelligible]. I carry the classification. I still have my seniority at Ford. But the actual work that I did in the plant has been very little, when you look at the number of years. But overall I've been completely satisfied. There have been periods of time, for political and other reasons, that you have your ups

and downs. But once I start working on a worker's problem or something of that nature, everything else becomes so inconsequential, it really doesn't amount to anything.

RUGGLES: Well, thank you very much. I've run out of specific questions. I'll probably think of a dozen, driving back. But is there anything that you'd like to add? Any statement about the UAW?

FORCHIONE: Well, I think you've covered all of it. And again, I'm surprised that they would come to me, other than the fact that I was an ex-member of the board. But I'm very happy that they did.

RUGGLES: Well, it may sound corny, but you're a part of history. You've been involved in some historic events. And 37 years in the UAW is part of an historic movement.

FORCHIONE: I often talk to Ken Bannon about sitting down and doing just exactly what we're doing. I tried to get him to do it while he was active in the department, to tell some of the stories that occurred in the back rooms and so forth. And I know that when you write something like this, you've got to be awfully careful, because if the other parties are dead . . . We were thinking about reproducing that booklet I wrote for Ken back in the early days, "We Work at Ford," so that the young members know where we came from — he gave me the assignment to teach me about what was happening.