

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY – SHAWN NICHOLSON
MARSHA DOLLARHITE DISCUSSES HER CAREER AS A
PLANT SECURITY OFFICER AT THE FISHER BODY PLANT IN LANSING, MI**

[recorder clicking]

This is Cheryl McQuaid. I'm with Lansing Fisher Body Historical Team. Today we are at Local 602's Union Hall conference room preparing to interview Marsha Dollarhite. It is December 12, 2005, at approximately 8:45 a.m. First we will go around the room.

Marilyn Coulter.

John Fedewa.

[0:25] And Marsha Dollarhite, could you state your name and spell your last name?

My name is Marsha Dollarhite. The last name is Dollarhite, D-O-L-L-A-R-H-I-T-E.

[0:37] And what is your address, Marsha?

The address is 3540 West Jason Road, DeWitt, Michigan 48820.

[0:47] And are you married? [0:48] Do you have children?

Um, I'm married. I've been married for 25 years. Uh, my husband is Todd Dollarhite and I have 2 children and 4 stepchildren and 5 grandchildren.

[1:02] Could you give me a little bit about your educational background?

Um, I grew up in Lansing, went to school in Lansing schools, then went out to Waverly School District, uh, graduated from Waverly High School, then went to Lansing Community College for 2 years, then went to Ferris at Big Rapids and I'm, g-, got a bachelor's degree from there.

[1:24] And did you do any military service?

No, no military service.

[1:28] And [clinking] the day you hired in at Fisher Body, could you give us your seniority date and any memories of walking into that plant the first time?

1Marsha Dollarhite: Um, [throat clearing] I think the first time when I walked in and I put the
2 application in, I applied for a security position and then was accepted for a
3 position basically about 2 days later and it was, um, eh, it was a real
4 culture shock because I had never been in an environment like that, so
5 when you – see, first off, of course, because you start off in an office area
6 and then you go out in the plant, so – but it was, it was very different. I
7 had never [clinking] been around too much of anything like that.
8

9Marilyn Coulter: [2:21] How was it different? [2:22] What was different...

10

11Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter.

12

13Marilyn Coulter: ...about it?

14

15Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn.

16

17Marsha Dollarhite: Um, eh, at least the thing is that say like when I was into the, the – out of
18 the office area, uh, how would it be different? Um, the language of people,
19 the speed of things, uh, was different than what I was used to I guess. I
20 don't know how else to...

21

22Cheryl McQuaid: [2:53] Um, what was the date?

23

24Marsha Dollarhite: [tsk] Um, it was, uh, [sneezing] maybe about June 16, 1976.

25

26Cheryl McQuaid: [3:03] In '76?

27

28Marsha Dollarhite: I'm not sure on the date but it was June of '76.

29

30Cheryl McQuaid: [3:07] And you hired into the Security Department?

31

32Marsha Dollarhite: Correct, into Security, yeah.

33

34Cheryl McQuaid: [3:11] And that was when it was Fisher Body Plant Security?

35

36Marsha Dollarhite: Correct.

37

38Cheryl McQuaid: [3:15] Um, could you tell us a little bit about the job requirements? Was
39 there a dress code, um, an orientation?

40

41Marsha Dollarhite: Um, we wore a uniform [clinking] and, um, once you were hired to do
42 security, then you, you were in training for either a week or 2 weeks and
43 then you were out on your own. [throat clearing] Um, and yes, there was
44 dress codes as far as, um, things as far as, um, how you could wear your
45 hair, which partly was because of the uniform and then it was also partly
46 because of, uh, for safety issues, for, [thumping] um, so that back at that

1 time, you had to either have your hair – for a female, eh, the fe-, the
2 female had to have their hair up as far as so that they didn't get their hair
3 caught in any machinery.
4
5 Um, [tsk] I'm trying to think of any other things that was – that were
6 uniform issues. Oh, actually, one that was kinda funny that was later
7 [coughing] but, um, um, women's security had to wear women's pants and
8 so obviously men wore men's and one – but they were differences and I
9 asked if I could get some men's pants simply because they had more
10 pockets [laughter] and I couldn't get 'em at that point. They wouldn't, um,
11 because it's like they wanted me to wear women's pants, um, even though
12 they weren't as efficient to wear them like that. Um, oh, and then I got –
13 the one time when – actually when I was going to get written up was in
14 reference to [clinking] about wearing my hair because I, I was going to
15 have it, um, in a, in a braid instead of having it up and they told me that
16 that, that was not allowed and then, eh, we got into kind of a problem
17 [tapping] with that and basically I can either agree with what they said or I
18 could hit the road.
19
20 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:17] And were there many women in that department?
21
22 Marsha Dollarhite: Um, there were women that had been there previous and at the time that I
23 hired in, um, there were some women that were there. They were still in
24 the minority, which is a change from what it is now. Um, but I had a
25 female secure-, security supervisor, um, [Jo Tift 5:39], um, but women
26 were definitely a minority in security.
27
28 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:48] Were there any, oh, jewelry-type regulations or...?
29
30 Marsha Dollarhite: You didn't – you weren't supposed to wear, um, [tapping] a lot of jewelry
31 or anything. It would – it was, um, um – you were supposed to like keep
32 everything very, eh – well either because of, um – [clinking] some of it
33 was either – some of it might have been safety issues but the other thing
34 was because the uniform, that no, you weren't supposed to wear a lot of
35 jewelry.
36
37 Cheryl McQuaid: Um, another thing, you said that when you went out on the floor the
38 culture was different than what you were used to. [6:24] Do you mean –
39 where did you work before?
40
41 Marsha Dollarhite: Well I hadn't very much. I went from a college environment, um, to – into
42 – I went from college into the factory, um, so it was, [thumping] um, eh, it
43 was just very different.
44
45 Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter. You said that the language was different. [knocking]
46 [6:45] How was the language different?

1
2Marsha Dollarhite: Um, let's see. Either, either how you – how people addressed each other, it
3 was a l-, it was a little bit more abrupt sometimes or, um, maybe, eh,
4 language as far as what was said to different people as far as with maybe
5 say swearing language, swearing that was done, um, um. I remember the
6 first time when I realized that, uh, that when someone like asked me to go
7 out and I realized that he wa-, [laughter] that he was married [knocking]
8 and, you know, that was when I was single and I was like – that was how
9 naive – because I came in very naive and th-, as far as just being dumb and
10 naive. I think that in some ways got me through a lot of situations that if I
11 had been not as naive, eh, because I was just – I was like appalled. It was
12 like, excuse me. [laughter] It was like – I mean it was, you know, and it –
13 that was just an environment that I wasn't [clinking] used to, eh, you
14 know, and then you get used to it and then you're just [inaudible 7:56] then
15 you just blow things like that off but I was just – it was just so – it was like
16 that h-, that was how, eh, when you first start at something like that, how
17 naive you can be and then it starts to kind of [thumping] get used to things.
18
19Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter. [8:11] So how was it being a woman security guard in
20 the, in the facility? [8:20] Were there many women that you saw on a
21 daily basis [throat clearing] or were women pretty much in the minority
22 throughout the plant that you noticed?
23
24Marsha Dollarhite: There was more men than women, um, in the shop, the same as there was
25 in Security but there was still a fair number of women that worked there in
26 the shop area, um, and in the office area. Um, the same is, I think, with a
27 number of things, that you had a lotta people that were very nice and then
28 you had a few that, um, were a little jerkier to work with.
29
30Marilyn Coulter: Okay.
31
32Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. [9:01] Do you reme-, could you maybe walk us through
33 a day when you walked into the plant, what you went through for the day,
34 what you did for lunch, um, some of the procedures that you had to
35 follow? [9:12] Uh, did you ever do like guard inspec-, I mean gate checks
36 or, um, train watches or – I don't know the verbiage that you would have
37 used but...
38
39Marsha Dollarhite: Okay.
40
41Cheryl McQuaid: ...that type of thing?
42
43Marsha Dollarhite: All right. Um, uh, normally what we would do is like say, like when I
44 would come in, we would change our clothes there at work. We had locker
45 rooms. Uh, we would, uh, change into uniform there. Um, we would all
46 start, uh, in like a conference area and then if there was anything to be

1 gone over as far as either things to check, um, things going on, anything
2 like that, uh, we would go over that and then we would start at a certain
3 time, [clanking] then we would head out and relieve [throat clearing] the
4 post. Um, everyone had, you know, where they would relieve someone.
5 Um, we had – at that time, we had either were what was called plant
6 positions or where you'd be out in the plant and doing things or you would
7 be, uh, doing gate duty. Some of the gates were either involved with truck
8 traffic and some of the gates were more involved with processing, uh,
9 people, pedestrians and visitors in and out of the plant. Um, we had a
10 number of gates depending on – at the time that I came in, actually, there
11 were less gates than, than in the past. They h-, they used to have gates that
12 were like to watch for, I think, the railroad and some different things like
13 that.
14

15 Um, [throat clearing] we had, um, we had Gate 15, Gate 9. Gate 15 was a
16 pedestrian gate where people just went in and out. Gate 9 was to process
17 truck traffic. Um, part of it was – the thing is so that, um, when the trucks
18 at Gate 9 would come in, we had to make sure that, that they were
19 supposed to be there, that they were there at the time they were supposed
20 to be, um, and get them to where they were supposed to go and the same
21 as say when they were going out that they had the appropriate paperwork
22 for when they left so as to make sure that what they took out was the right
23 material. Um, we had gates on the other side of the plant, Gate 4X, which
24 was kind of a, a different gate because the primary thing that that gate did
25 was for what was called the body haulers. The body haulers took the
26 bodies from Fisher Body over to the assembly plant across town and that
27 was the sole thing – the primary thing that that gate was for. It was the –
28 watch that the body haulers went in and out and those were huge trucks
29 because they would carry 7 bodies in the trailer with them. Um, and it was
30 – you always c-, they – the drivers of those haulers always kind of rode a
31 fine line because they always had to, um, do things legally.
32

33 They had to do things safely but, yet, they always had someone watching
34 over their shoulder because the thing is those vehicles had to get over to
35 the assembly plant and they had to get there in a timely fashion because if
36 they didn't, they could shut the line down, so it was always kind of a, a
37 mixed [throat clearing] place for, for those drivers because the thing is
38 they had to do what they were supposed to do but, yet, do it in a matter
39 that everybody would be happy with and there was sometimes things that
40 could happen as far as, as far as the body haulers because they would
41 sometimes have situations that could occur, eh, on their way back and
42 forth as far as the kids either throwing things at the trucks, different things
43 like that. Okay? Um, [throat clearing] the other thing that could happen at
44 Gate 4X is that people came in and out through there. The employees
45 came in and out through that way.
46

1 Um, to begin with, uh, at the gates where the employees came through, uh,
2 what was supposed to happen at that point was is that we were supposed to
3 check badges to ensure that people were appropriate to come into the plant
4 and had the right access to come in, then they would clock in once they
5 got into the plant. That changed later where they would have a, have a
6 badge, which they would clock in – well, they would badge right there,
7 um, at the entry to the plant, um, and that would be like if you had gate
8 duty. [throat clearing] If you had plant duty, [throat clearing] you could do
9 a number of different things. First off, you would be r-, possibly either
10 like, you know, like doing tours through the plant. Um, sometimes if you
11 needed to open locks for people either because they forgot things, um, or,
12 um, didn't have their keys for various reasons. [tsk] Um, [throat clearing]
13 sometimes you had medical problems. You had fire problems. Um, um, s-,
14 various different problems that could accrue, um, either maybe someone
15 had – there could be a disciplinary problem and you had to escort
16 somebody out of the plant, um, a number of different things like that.
17

18Marilyn Coulter: Hm.

19

20Cheryl McQuaid: [14:45] Can you share with us any of the problems you may have seen?
21 [14:49] Uh, did you ever see any factory-type accidents, um, medical
22 accidents, [throat clearing] that type of thing?
23

24Marsha Dollarhite: Um, there was, uh, various types of accidents that can occur in a factory,
25 um, some of which – some of them that I saw little parts of. Um, let's, let's
26 see. I'm trying to think. [tsk] You could have any type of a range on
27 something like that, uh, between where someone possibly, um, slipped and
28 fell. Um, they could've pinched, um, pinched fingers, um, broken things,
29 um, heart attacks. Any of that can – [knocking] anything – I always – what
30 I thought of a factory is it's the same as a city and actually Fisher Body
31 was bigger than a lot of small cities bec-, but, eh, people come in and then
32 they leave but you still need to have the same abilities to take care of
33 people that you do in villages, cities and towns. You've gotta have your
34 fire, your medical. All of that has to occur because the amount of people
35 that you've got there. Um, um, let's see. We had, um, a couple that were –
36 I guess ones that I would remember more, there were 2 of them. One again
37 was in the back of Building 23 related to the Gate 4X with the body
38 haulers.
39

40 Two of the body haulers – [throat clearing] [clanking] in a sense [throat
41 clearing] if you had ever seen those trucks and the way that they went in
42 and out back through there, um, you had to be an excellent driver and you
43 also had to be very coordinated for what you were doing. Um,
44 unfortunately, that there was this one time with some other things that
45 were going on but there was an accident involving, uh, some of those
46 haulers and they had to have Lansing Township come in in order to

1 extricate the, um, the driver of the hauler because he was pinned in the
2 truck. [throat clearing] Um, so that was kinda interesting [inaudible 17:04]
3 with, with trying to get the help in and, eh, doing what we could do.
4 Probably another one that was involved was when we were under
5 construction [tapping] and they were doing work – contractors were doing
6 work on top of the powerhouse and doing work between the powerhouse
7 and what was Building 21 and they were – they had cranes that were, that
8 were transporting big pipe onto that area and one of the, um, chains on the
9 pipe snapped and the pipe swung around and hit, and hit one of the
10 security people. It hit Jim Richard.
11
12Marilyn Coulter: I remember that.
13
14Male: Yeah.
15
16Marsha Dollarhite: Okay? And what was said many times was that it was fortunate that it had
17 h-, that it hit him because the other security person that was up there
18 because they were doing, um, uh, patrols and like checking, that if it had
19 hit her, it woulda knocked her off the [inaudible 18:11] because Jim
20 Richard was, was a, [tapping] a bigger guy and if – [throat clearing] yeah,
21 it woulda – it could've very likely knocked her off and he was, he was off
22 for a, a long time because it did a lotta [clanking] damage to him on that.
23 So those, I guess, would be two I would think of.
24
25Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter.
26
27Marilyn Coulter: [18:30] Um, with all the different types of things that you had to deal with
28 as a security guard [throat clearing] was there any types of specific
29 training that they really trained you for to handle those types of situations?
30
31Marsha Dollarhite: There was a number of things [clanking] that, that we received training in,
32 um, um, first aid, uh, CPR, fire training. A lot of it was training, eh, eh – I
33 figured a lot of it was training where the more that you knew about the
34 plant, the more that you knew of what was going on in the plant was
35 almost as key or critical to a lot of the things that happened. If you knew
36 some of what the people were doing in the plant, what was going on, um,
37 [rattling] locations of things was equally important.
38
39Marilyn Coulter: Hm. Okay. [19:22] Um, eh – Marilyn Coulter – so, um, did you get to
40 have much interaction with the employees in the plant?
41
42Marsha Dollarhite: Um, yeah, actually quite a bit, I thought. Um, there was times there was –
43 and I guess some groups that I had a fair amount of interaction with and,
44 um, various groups not as much, um. Eh, I think the 3 groups that
45 probably that was figured that was there the most would – probably you
46 would say would be either, um, Security, then Maintenance and then

1 Medical were groups that were like pretty much were there all the time,
2 um, whether it was Christmas or anything like that that normally, um,
3 [tapping] those were the groups that had to be there to keep things
4 running, um, take care of things, so there was a lot of interaction between,
5 um, those 3 groups.
6

7Marilyn Coulter: [20:23] Now as security people, did you have rotational shifts or were you
8 like on a specific shift or did you have to rotate periodically or...?
9

10Marsha Dollarhite: Um, at the time that I came in, um, the shift that you were on was by
11 seniority and it was – that was how it was held, um, and I know it had
12 been done other ways in the past but when I came in, it was done by
13 seniority so that you, you would stay on that shift and then as you gain
14 more seniority, then like once, like once a year, you would, uh, you could
15 pick what shift you wanted to stay on. So let's say if you wanted to – you
16 had people that were high seniority that wanted to stay on midnights and
17 high seniority that wanted to – depending on what shift they wanted to
18 stay on...
19

20Marilyn Coulter: Hm.
21

22Marsha Dollarhite: ...and they could pick.
23

24Marilyn Coulter: [21:14] So now which, which shift did you primarily work?
25

26Marsha Dollarhite: I worked afternoons [throat clearing] the entire time.
27

28Marilyn Coulter: [21:18] Yeah, and that was your preferred shift or your...
29

30Marsha Dollarhite: Yeah.
31

32Marilyn Coulter: ...[seniority shift 21:21]?
33

34Marsha Dollarhite: Yeah.
35

36Marilyn Coulter: I want to digress a little bit. You said that you were a Lansing resident.
37

38Marsha Dollarhite: Correct.
39

40 [knocking]
41

42Marilyn Coulter: [21:27] But now which school did you go to in Lansing? [21:29] Which
43 junior high or high school did you go to?
44

45Marsha Dollarhite: I went to Genesee Street School...
46

1 Marilyn Coulter: Okay.
2
3 Marsha Dollarhite: ...um, for grade school and then I went to West Junior High School.
4
5 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. [21:39] So as you were growing up in Lansing, did you know
6 anything about Fisher Body? [21:45] Had you ever been in the plant?
7 [21:47] Had you ever been by the plant? [21:48] Did you know what was
8 done here?
9
10 Marsha Dollarhite: Um, eh, actually I knew a little bit about it but not very much, um, because
11 I went to, I went to summer school at Verlinden School, which is right
12 next to it, so there was a little bit of just knowledge from being near it but,
13 uh, another – I guess one thing that, eh, I always thought was pretty, I
14 mean it struck me but the thing is there was on the front of the plant, there
15 was, uh, the landscaping. They had, they had, um, um, the logo out front
16 and it was just really neat to look at. You know? They had it all, you
17 know, taken care of like that. [tsk] Um, and then see, my dad worked for
18 General Motors, so I didn't really have too much to do with Fisher Body
19 but the thing is that once in a while, I would like wait outside the gate or
20 something when we had to pick him up or something for over – at
21 Oldsmobile, so.
22
23 Marilyn Coulter: Okay.
24
25 Marsha Dollarhite: Uh, anyways and then so, um, the last year that West Junior was going to
26 be open and then we moved out to Waverly and went to – I went to g-,
27 junior high out there at West Junior at Waverly and then Waverly High
28 School.
29
30 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. I just wondered how [inaudible 23:08] you, um, [tapping] if you
31 had any thoughts about the building. [23:13] Um, the other thing about it
32 is insofar as, um, having interaction with the, the employees, there's 1
33 employee that you had special interaction with and who was that?
34
35 Marsha Dollarhite: Yeah. I guess I was trying to keep track on some of what [throat clearing]
36 Security when we were doing some major, um, deconstruction and – well
37 deconstruction is a big name for when you like basically do a lotta tear out
38 in the plant, um, and because there was so much going on as far as with
39 cutting and welding that they, literally they, they did not have enough
40 security in order to take care of that, [clinking] so they had hourly. They
41 had a group of hourly people that they trained to basically be, um,
42 firemen's helpers and they would help as far as for watching areas, um,
43 you know, being there with hoses, checking things and things like that.
44 They all wear o-, orange coveralls. They used to call'm pumpkins
45 [laughter] and, um, there was a group of'm and, um, and so since we were
46 all kind of like working together and stuff and it just ended up so that, um,

1 one of them [clanking] that was one of those pumpkins ended up one that I
2 would, um, kind of keep track on and it ended up that he was – he ended
3 up being my husband...
4
5 Marilyn Coulter: Hm.
6
7 Marsha Dollarhite: ...so.
8
9 Marilyn Coulter: [24:37] So, uh, what year did you guys meet?
10
11 Marsha Dollarhite: '70- [coughing] [inaudible 24:44] '78, '79, '77. Yeah, so probably about
12 '77, '78.
13
14 Marilyn Coulter: [24:54] And so you and he dated for a while?
15
16 Marsha Dollarhite: Yeah.
17
18 Marilyn Coulter: [Huh 24:58].
19
20 Marsha Dollarhite: Yeah.
21
22 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid.
23
24 Marsha Dollarhite: Mm-hm.
25
26 Cheryl McQuaid: [25:01] What kind of d-, were there any problems from the people out on
27 the floor about a security person dating an hourly person?
28
29 Marsha Dollarhite: I think there was, um, and I think that, that, um, there was a lotta times
30 where the thing is that, um, um, I would try to – we always were very firm
31 as far as the – what was going on in my work, um, if there was things that,
32 that maybe either I didn't tell him about. There was tings-, times I didn't
33 tell him about maybe certain things, um, [clanking] that way, so there was
34 no conflict for him. In the same fashion that maybe if there was something
35 where it was not, um, approp-, you know, [throat clearing] something
36 where it was not a good time [clanking] for him to tell me maybe about a
37 certain thing. We tried to kinda keep some, some lines on a few things,
38 um, and it was still that you had to be kind of a little bit careful because,
39 uh, there was some, th-, there was some conflicts sometimes and there
40 was, there was some different – a couple different situations where there
41 was some serious conflict as far as between people in the plant being
42 concerned about, um, when things were said either to him about, um, with
43 me, so.
44
45 Cheryl McQuaid: Um, and something else that I've been wanting...
46

1Marsha Dollarhite: Okay.
2

3Cheryl McQuaid: You said that when you first arrived here in the morning you would go
4 change and go to a conference room and kinda get updated on what's been
5 happening in the plant, things you needed to know. [26:47] Did you ever
6 see, um, [throat clearing] like statistics on theft, um, medical things, uh?
7 [26:56] You know, like what was the number 1 medical? [26:59] Was it –
8 I've, I've always heard heart attack. I don't know. Uh, if I've heard it, I'm
9 sure a lotta other people heard the heart attack on a Monday or something
10 like that was your number 1 medical thing in a factory. [27:11] Um, eh,
11 and how were those things dealt with? [27:15] I mean, were you given a
12 heads up that, you know, s-...
13

14Marsha Dollarhite: [27:19] Do you mean as far as information?
15

16Cheryl McQuaid: Yeah.
17

18Marsha Dollarhite: Uh, I don't think like in, in, um – when we were like – and what, what we
19 would call it was like the squad room would be like the small conference
20 that we were in. But, um, information-wise, I don't think that that was
21 necessarily what we would go over information at that time. We might say
22 have a class and they would go over some things like that. Um, um,
23 [clanking] heart attack might be – heart attack, um, which you had to be
24 careful about. [We 27:54] say like when it was, um, uh, summertime or
25 warm weather is – would be like either because of like heat stroke, heat
26 exhaustion, um, and you'd have to because the thing is – or say that when
27 people were working a lot and the thing is that, that depending on what
28 other things that might be o-, occurring as far as with substance abuse, um,
29 because those created problems of their own and sometimes they
30 precipitated or helped along other things, so, um, you had to kind of be
31 aware of [clicking] different problems occurring because of substance
32 abuse.
33

34Cheryl McQuaid: [28:39] And [clanking] mentioning substance abuse, did you see much
35 substance abuse?
36

37Marsha Dollarhite: Yeah.
38

39Cheryl McQuaid: [28:45] Did you?
40

41Marsha Dollarhite: Yeah.
42

43Cheryl McQuaid: [28:47] Um, what kind? [28:49] Can you tell us a little bit?
44

45Marsha Dollarhite: Um, [throat clearing] well when working afternoon shift, um, um, there
46 would be, um, [throat clearing] again, I guess – okay. There would be, um

1 – [throat clearing] well [clanking] there's different kinds and – of
2 substance abuse but I think probably, uh, a more common w-, would be
3 either because of, um, drinking or alcohol, um, uh, marijuana, um,
4 probably – and there was, you know, some other, other drugs – drug-
5 related things but I – I mean, probably a common one medical-wise [one
6 had been 29:29] alcohol because either, [coughing] either, um, that would
7 contribute to either [rattling] medical problems or it could contribute to
8 discipline problems, so.
9

10 Marilyn Coulter: [29:45] [Did you 29:45]...
11

12 Cheryl McQuaid: [Oh 29:45] [29:45] What would you think [tapping] that the, um, the
13 reason for the second shift having the substance abuse? [29:56] I mean, I
14 know you were on the second shift, so therefore, that's where you saw it
15 but do you think that's where the problem was or do you think [rattling]
16 dayshift had the same problem?
17

18 Marsha Dollarhite: Oh, I'm sure that probably all the shifts had a problem [clanking] but I
19 think there was some things that probably either that a number of, not all,
20 but a number of the people that were on the what would be afternoon or
21 the s-, what we called second shift, um, a lot of'm were a lot younger, um,
22 and then again say the thing is that when you figure the – that the shift
23 started at either like, uh, 4:30 or 5:00, so that it was a later time, uh, would
24 be a couple reasons.
25

26 Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter:
27

28 Marilyn Coulter: [30:39] Did you find that there was any day of the week that was worse?
29 [30:43] Is it true that Fridays or Saturdays [would be 30:45] worse?
30

31 Marsha Dollarhite: Fridays and Saturdays would be, would be excellent, um, where you might
32 have more. Another thing actually that sometimes might contribute is the
33 thing is, let's say, when there was times when we were working a lot of
34 overtime and if you're working a lotta Saturdays, if you're working a lot
35 because the thing is that – another thing is that when people get tired, um,
36 when people are tired and it's hot, um, those can be things that can, um,
37 affect people just as much too.
38

39 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
40

41 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. [31:17] Marsha, can you tell us any funny stories,
42 something that you saw that you'll never forget happened or, um, just
43 some of your memories that you just [throat clearing] you'll never forget
44 about the plant, [rattling] about the people in the plant?
45

1Marsha Dollarhite: Um, [pause] I'm blank. I really can't – I, uh, um, [pause] I mean there was,
2 eh, you know, with the time that I was there and there was a number of
3 different situations, um, some of them even involving some of the
4 disciplines that we had would sometimes be a little bit unique. Um,
5 anytime when you had, [rattling] uh, people that were, uh – had been
6 drinking or something that sometimes what might occur could either be
7 where there were, um, problems or as in they would be belligerent or they
8 might be e-, the exact opposite and they would be very happy and amorous
9 and [laughter] you just never knew which way it was gonna go sometimes.
10 [coughing] [laughter]
11
12 Um, you know, and a lotta times it was just a matter of like how you
13 treated people and then you sometimes had to just, you know, it's like
14 okay, now you just – okay, just, just, just sit down and you'll be fine and
15 just wait and everything's fine; no, really, just sit down; it's really okay;
16 just sit down, [laughter] okay. Um, and you just – you never do, you
17 know, when you went on something like that, um – because sometimes
18 they could turn on a dime from – you know if they were happy with you
19 and then they could turn and then they would be not happy with someone
20 else depending on, you know, what was occurring in the conversation, um,
21 and then a lot of the people in the plant were just really good to work with
22 and things too.
23
24Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter.
25
26Marilyn Coulter: Um, Cheryl, just l-, I mean [laughter] Marsha, um, we've gone through
27 some name changes but as from Fisher Body, BOC [throat clearing]
28 Lansing Car Assembly, so you've, you've had 2 different types of things.
29 You've had that change happen...
30
31Marsha Dollarhite: Mm-hm.
32
33Marilyn Coulter: ...and I want to know how that affected you but I know also as a security
34 person, you went from sec-, from GM Security to Pinkerton to Securitas.
35 [33:40] How did that wor-, how did all those changes affect Marsha?
36
37Marsha Dollarhite: Um, actually there was more name changes probably for us than for
38 probably some people in the plant. We were considered a part of salary
39 and what they did is they changed – we had, we had probably 3 or 4 other
40 names changes within our group. We were like Lansing Regional, Lansing
41 Regional Assembly. There was like a number of other names when we –
42 because Security went from being part of, of Lansing, then it became part
43 of another group all within the GM group before it even split off. There
44 was other – these little, these little tiny names that we had and it became
45 very frustrating because you didn't, you didn't know. Sometimes even it's
46 like well w-, what's the point? Why are they doing this and, um, it became

1 a little frustrating sometimes to figure, you know, what was occurring with
2 some of this. Um, and then, of course, then when, um, Security was, um,
3 s-, was sold in, um, 1993 – excuse me – yeah, 1993 and, um, [throat
4 clearing] that was done in a rather rapid fashion and it was sold to, to
5 Pinkerton, which was later bought by Securitas. So yeah, it's, it's been a
6 little confusing sometimes, sometimes when you would, would change
7 names. Yeah.
8

9Marilyn Coulter: [35:12] Um, you had name changes buzz-, but was there a lot of change
10 for you other than the name?
11

12Marsha Dollarhite: Oh, yeah. There was a lotta change that occurred because I think that
13 Security, the same as with a lot of other things in the plant where you went
14 from, um, having a certain maybe way of doing things and when some of
15 that changed, um, uh – I'm trying to think – either how people did things.
16 Yeah.
17

18Marilyn Coulter: [35:58] Just the manner in which things were done completely...
19

20Marsha Dollarhite: Yeah.
21

22Marilyn Coulter: ...different? Um, were – I know within General Motors they allowed their
23 employees to have a lot of involvement. [36:12] Did they allow Security
24 to have involvement in the decisions that were made with your department
25 or was that something that was done higher up? [clanking]
26

27Marsha Dollarhite: Oh, decisions were made higher up. There, uh, there wasn't that – the – I
28 don't think the – when you talk about employee involvement...
29

30Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
31

32Marsha Dollarhite: ...that was – that didn't so much occur as far on our security end.
33

34Marilyn Coulter: Okay. Um...
35

36Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. [36:39] Marsha, did you – were you ever involved in
37 any of the plant dinners? [36:43] Did Security have a dinner or did
38 Security go to, uh, department plants out on the f-, uh, department parties
39 out on the floor for dinner and were there any dinners, not dinners – was
40 there anything [clanking] generosity-wise that the employees of the plant
41 that you saw that [clanking] you have a memory of?
42

43Marsha Dollarhite: Um, Security would have, would have their own dinners, same as like a lot
44 of the other, uh, departments in the plant where they would have their own
45 and then, uh, many times, um – well I guess maybe I was, eh – I don't
46 know. I wouldn't – it would be stretching it to say I was unique but the

1 thing is that because, um, I associated with Maintenance quite a bit and so
2 I know personally that I would go to a lot to the Maintenance dinners.
3 Maintenance had a lotta dinners and so I would go to theirs. I would take
4 food for theirs, um, and then sometimes for the other – some of the other
5 areas like say that I would – might, might bring some things in too
6 because I usually like to bring a lotta stuff in but there was a number of
7 different dinners, um, and things like that.
8

9Marilyn Coulter: Uh, Marilyn Coulter. Now I know we also did have a lot of vending inside
10 the plant be it, be it food or be it Christmas items. [38:08] Did – how did
11 that affect you as a security guard? [38:10] Was it something that you
12 were allowed to partake in? [38:12] Did you partake in that or...?
13

14Marsha Dollarhite: Um, well you can look at from t-, from – there was a couple different
15 ways that that could be looked at. The first would be as far as, you know,
16 the – what was supposed to happen is as far as vending was is that
17 officially vending was not supposed to occur in the plant. Um, our part of
18 that for security-wise is that we were not – we weren't supposed to allow
19 that – some of those different items to come into the plant. Um, now
20 whether or not if – however, some of them came into the plant, whether,
21 you know, if they come in in small, you know, things or something, that
22 was hard to say. Um, um, and then the reas-, some of the reasons why that
23 occurred as far as for not having vending in the plant would be either
24 because of – so there was no conflict with the cafeteria that was in the
25 plant so that people would use those facilities and also because of there
26 being concerns as far as for safety of the items that were being – that
27 might be, um, out for purchase in the plant to make sure that no one might
28 say get sick from something in the plant. That was, that was one of the
29 concerns, so.
30

31 Um, honestly, probably as far as partaking, um, on some things that I
32 know that I did, if a – on some things, um, if they had, [clanking] say, pop,
33 things like that, um – [throat clearing] yeah. I don't know what else to...
34

35Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. Okay. Um, the other thing about it is, unfortunately, I know there
36 were a few times that we did have strikes and how was that for you on a –
37 well you had 2 things. Number 1, you were married to an hourly person
38 and number 2, you were a Security person. [40:11] How did those strikes,
39 layoff-type things when you had to deal with employees, how did that
40 work with you?
41

42Marsha Dollarhite: I think there was a big difference, uh, maybe at the time that I came in,
43 um, there was not a lot of strikes per se but the way I always looked at
44 things differently was there was sometimes a difference between,
45 [clicking] okay, between if you thought something was gonna be a, a long-
46 term thing or you if you thought it was gonna be a short term because

1 there was a difference in the attitude of people in the plant if they knew
2 that probably that if they were gonna walk out and but they were gonna be
3 back in, in about 12 hours' time. There's a huge, you know – then it's like
4 that if, if the national contract was going to expire [zipping] at midnight
5 and they were going – everybody was gonna walk out at midnight but
6 from the sounds of it the con-, the contract was going to [rattling] be
7 settled probably by about a day and a half later, then people were, you
8 know, pretty upbeat when they would go out and that would, you know,
9 that would be all right. [throat clearing]

10
11 Um, things that we would have to do, uh, as far as for in a situation like
12 that, as far as for security is that you would be looking for either to make
13 sure that the plant was still in a safe condition for people to come back
14 into and 2 things you would be looking at would be either to make sure
15 that nothing happened in the plant through mistake or through intention
16 through, say like if someone was upset and through sabotage or
17 something. Um, that's why you always had – that say after something like
18 that occurred, if say like if there was a walkout, you, you'd do extra tours
19 through the plant, um, make sure that things were turned off. One of the
20 things that always occurred or normally occurred would be that say during
21 a strike, there was always a handful of skilled trades that were agreed by
22 the union that would be allowed into the plant in order to service and make
23 sure that things were kept in a working order. Um, you didn't want to lose
24 the plant due to, um, possibly the lack of an electrician or a pipefitter, uh,
25 of something happening. You wanna keep your plant in a working
26 condition so that everybody come, come back and have a job.

27
28 Marilyn Coulter: Hm.

29
30 Marsha Dollarhite: Um, [throat clearing] to me, I think during the '70s and again away from
31 the strikes but I think what affected probably a lotta people as – affected
32 people more than a strike would be when there were economic layoffs
33 and, again, th-, there can be a difference between when you think it's short
34 term and when you have no clue when you're gonna come back. There's a
35 whole different attitude as far as, um, uh, when, when you have no idea
36 when you're gonna come back and that was say like during the 70s is
37 when they came out with TRA or the Trade Relief Act when they literally
38 – when people were getting [throat clearing] additional monies [rattling]
39 during that time because of the amount of – either because of energy crisis
40 or because of the amount of vehicles [clanking] that were not being made
41 due to going, um, out of country. So, um, but between short term and long
42 term, there was a big difference as far as the way that things are looked at.

43
44 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. There are 2 things that as an employee I remember and I was
45 wondering – I don't know if you worked those times but, um, I know
46 during my time here, we've had 2 blackouts. [44:03] How was that – how

1 were those blackouts for, uh, Secur-, for Security and were you here that
2 time?
3
4 Marsha Dollarhite: I'm trying to think of what – if, um, eh, I mean, I was at – let's see. I was
5 at, at Plant 2 for the last one that was about a year ago.
6
7 Marilyn Coulter: [44:19] Mm-hm but I think they had another one 1979?
8
9 Cheryl McQuaid: I think it was '79.
10
11 Marilyn Coulter: In '79 on the second shift the had a blackout. They had a power outage
12 where they had to let the shift go. [clanking]
13
14 Marsha Dollarhite: Okay. And, honestly, I don't think I would remember too [rattling] much
15 about that one. What I probably would remember more about is say like
16 when we had a lot of snow and, um, you know, and the things that would
17 occur when you had weather problems, things like that.
18
19 Marilyn Coulter: [44:45] What types of things would happen with weather problems?
20
21 Marsha Dollarhite: Well, eh, again, eh, the plant doesn't shut down very often [snapping]
22 because – either because it affects a lot of things. You have, um, a lot of
23 material traffic, uh, people that are all involved in this big circle that goes
24 around to try and – you know, what's gonna happen to this so that say if
25 the plant shuts down but you still have trucks that are inbound, um, you
26 know, what do you do with all these different things. But, um, I'm trying
27 to think. It was, I think probably about 1977 when they had a major
28 snowstorm that came in that, that did shut the plant down, um, and of
29 course it – again being dumb and gullible and I said that I would come in.
30 Um, of course I had no way to get it [throat clearing] but we'll come and
31 pick you up and they literally, they came and they picked me up.
32 [laughter] Yeah. They came and picked...
33
34 Cheryl McQuaid: I'm so sorry. [laughter]
35
36 Marsha Dollarhite: And – but the thing is again, see, that – because I was on afternoons and it
37 wasn't so bad when they picked me up [thumping] but it was when they
38 had – and it wasn't, it wasn't, um, it wasn't like work came and picked me
39 up but it was like one of the other security people that, that had a – like a,
40 like a SUV. At that time, [clanking] they weren't that big but, um, he came
41 and picked me up but, of course, I had to walk out from my apartment
42 complex and walk out to the road for him to pick me up. Well the trick
43 was that when he dropped me off and, of course, everything had drifted, so
44 and then I, I was thinking I don't know if I'm gonna do this again. So, um,
45 but that was kinda interesting because the thing is that, uh, when you have
46 something like that occur and there has to be a decision made as far as if

1 you're – by management – if you're going to let the plant run. You know?
2 Do you have enough to run the plant? Um, what are you going to do with
3 the people that are in the plant, all these kind of things because we like,
4 during that time period, um, cars were in the lot that couldn't even get out
5 of the parking lot. Um, there was that much snow. I mean it just shut
6 everything right down, so.
7

8Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. You mentioned that you were very close with the skilled
9 trades people. [47:05] Did you ever have – did any of the skilled trades
10 people do anything for you to make your job easier? Um, did they look –
11 what, um – I'm trying to think of how I want to say this. [47:23] What
12 kind of relationship did you have with the skilled trades people? [47:25]
13 What kind of people were they?
14

15Marsha Dollarhite: The majority of'm were very, uh, were very nice people and I think the
16 thing is that, uh, it was, again a lot of security was where you were in a
17 sense, um, walking a line because a lot of the times you were – these were
18 people that you were friends with and but then every once in a while that
19 you might have to – like on [kind of 47:48] weld permits or enforcing a
20 safety rules where you might have to and as tactful or nice a way as
21 possible you might have to maybe explain, um, something that had to be
22 done differently than how they perceived it had to be done and sometimes
23 that went well and then sometimes there might be a little disagreement on
24 something. You had to kind of, you know, kind of walk a line to try and,
25 you know, do what needed to be done but do it so that, um, they would,
26 uh, try to agree as much as possible like that. Um, again, the thing is that
27 say especially like with cut and welds where the thing is that you have a
28 group that is very knowledgeable in what they're doing with their work but
29 then they – you have [rattling] someone else come in in a sense to oversee
30 their work, that can sometimes in itself cause types of conflict because of
31 that.
32

33Cheryl McQuaid: [48:43] Could you explain to me what is cut and weld?
34

35Marsha Dollarhite: Sure. Um, cut and weld has to do with that in the plant when, [clanking]
36 uh, Maintenance would do work for, eh – if they needed to either, uh,
37 build something, fix something, tear it apart, um, cutting would be, let's
38 say like with a torch when they needed to maybe say cut a section out uh,
39 or cut some metal to change it. Cutting, welding and grinding, all of that
40 would require a permit in order to make sure that the area and whatever
41 the work was something that was safe for them to do. Um, sometimes
42 there might be either, you know, things that needed to be changed before
43 that was g-, before it was a good thing to do. That is what cutting was.
44

45 Um, welding in, in – whereas like that was where like you would be, um,
46 welding to put something together. Um, grinding, we're using, eh, uh,

1 where you're grinding it out, uh, either grinding welds out, different things
2 like that. Um, and, uh, just the thing is that, that, um, you have, you know,
3 same as with a lotta different people, you have some people that were very
4 experienced and knew very well how to do different things and you had
5 different levels of experience for doing things, different conditions and
6 environments that sometimes were good to do this type of work in and
7 then some of them where you needed to make adjustments in order to, um,
8 make sure that the work was done safely. A lotta the concern we had
9 would've been say for our Paint Department, um, as far as, um, what they
10 did in the Paint Department and to make sure that you didn't burn the
11 plant down.
12
13 Cheryl McQuaid: [50:36] So a cut and weld required a permit for safety reasons, uh, make
14 sure they weren't near explosive stuff, that type of thing?
15
16 Marsha Dollarhite: Correct.
17
18 Cheryl McQuaid: Okay.
19
20 Marsha Dollarhite: Uh, that there was no flammables by it, um, that you didn't have like say –
21 like especially with Fisher Body being either a 1, 2 or 3-story building,
22 you could – you had to – what you always watched for is that say like
23 when there was work done maybe on say 2nd or 3rd floor that you didn't
24 have say sparks that went through to the levels below, things like that and
25 then, of course, let's say when you had a paint department that was above
26 body shop, um, that you didn't want any liquids, fumes, anything like that
27 that might be able to travel down into an environment where you had
28 sparks from a body shop too.
29
30 Marilyn Coulter: Hm.
31
32 Cheryl McQuaid: Okay.
33
34 Marilyn Coulter: Um, Marsha – Marilyn Coulter – uh, w-, changing the wheels again, a
35 lotta times people think that Security – General Motors, Fisher Body
36 Security has anything only to do with General Motors. There are some
37 things that the Security used to do for the community. [51:46] Can you tell
38 us a little bit about some of those things, how we affected the community,
39 how you helped? I know we did some things with the school children and
40 things like that. [51:53] Can you talk a little bit about that?
41
42 Marsha Dollarhite: Oh, um, um, well one of the duties that was done, um, on the afternoon
43 shift was, uh, that because of the time that the Verlinden Street School got
44 out of school and then with the people getting out of work, we would go
45 up and, uh, make sure that the kids got across the street safely to make
46 sure that there was no problem, um, that way.

1
2 Marilyn Coulter: [52:24] Were there any other types of things that you did to help the
3 community, people to – to help the community stay safe?
4
5 Marsha Dollarhite: Um, there was various times when either you may have things that might
6 occur around the plant, either on the periphery of the plant and whereas,
7 like, you might need to make contact with fire or police agencies in order
8 to get help coming to people, uh, because we, we were there and we were
9 seen when things might happen with something and we would be able to,
10 uh, be able to sometimes more quickly be able to call. And say you've got
11 an accident, you know, at this corner or something like that, you know, go
12 ahead and call the police right now, things like that.
13
14 Marilyn Coulter: Okay.
15
16 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. [53:17] What did you think about, uh, the gate
17 collections? Um, we had the marines out there for what – Toys for Tots.
18 [53:26] Was – did that cause any problems security-wise, having all these
19 different people standing around the gates?
20
21 Marsha Dollarhite: Um, I don't think it was so much a problem when they were standing,
22 when they were standing right at the gates for the pedestrians. Um, what
23 you had to be careful about is to make sure that say that they didn't
24 interfere with any of the truck traffic or anything like that. Um, eh, uh, you
25 spoke of, I think, Toys for Tots. You had Toys for Tots. You had, um, you
26 had, um, Old Newsboys. I'm trying to think. Those are the 2 big ones at
27 Christmastime. Um, and again the thing is that you had various other
28 things depending on if there was any other situations that had come up
29 where they would ask for money for things.
30
31 Cheryl McQuaid: [54:19] Marsha, is there anything that we've not asked you that you'd like
32 to share with us?
33
34 Marsha Dollarhite: Just I don't know, uh, I touched on a little bit but the thing is that to me the
35 huge thing that really struck me as far as with working at Fisher Body and
36 I think it's true of a lot of places but the thing is that it was, it was literally
37 like a small city and the thing is as far as the people that you got to know,
38 um, and because it was literally you were building relationships with
39 people, um, y-, that you saw more than [rattling] your relatives, um, that
40 were there all the time and it just, um, uh, was just a, a very shame to see
41 when it, um – the plant had to close.
42
43 Marilyn Coulter: The plant is closing. [55:11] How did it affect you to know that the plant
44 was closing and that they're gonna tear it down?
45

1Marsha Dollarhite: [tsk] Um, I think it bothered me, uh, to think of them closing it and then
2 taking it down and I think especially after seeing how quickly that it seems
3 as if they are proceeding with closing it, um, again is – and almost an
4 indication of changes in how things are done management-wise, um, eh,
5 almost as if sections have been like written off and they just simply wanna
6 close the chapter on it I think. Um, [tsk] yeah.
7
8Cheryl McQuaid: Okay. Thank you...
9
10Marilyn Coulter: Thank you.
11
12Cheryl McQuaid: ...so much for spending some time with us and, [throat clearing] and
13 letting us talk to you.
14
15Marsha Dollarhite: Okay.
16
17Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you.
18
19Marsha Dollarhite: Thank you.
20
21 [recorder clicking]
22
23
24/lo