

1 **Marlene Stavros discusses her career as a production worker, skilled trades tool repair**  
2 **person and UAW member at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**  
3  
4

5Cheryl McQuaid: Today is April 27th, 2006. It's approximately 9:25 a.m. and we're in the  
6 UAW Local 602 Conference Room. First we'll introduce the team.  
7

8Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher.  
9

10John Fedewa: John Fedewa.  
11

12Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith.  
13

14Cheryl McQuaid: And I'm Cheryl McQuaid. Um, today we're interviewing Marlene Stavros.  
15 [0:23] Is [sniffing] that correct?  
16

17Marlene Stavros: Yes, it is. [coughing]  
18

19Cheryl McQuaid: [0:26] Marlene, would you state your name and spell your last name for us?  
20 [chair squeaking]  
21

22Marlene Stavros: It's Marlene Stavros; my last name is spelled S-T-A-V-R-O-S.  
23

24Cheryl McQuaid: [0:36] And what is your address?  
25

26Marlene Stavros: 210 West Fairfield, Lansing, Michigan.  
27

28Cheryl McQuaid: [0:41] Are you married? Do you have children?  
29

30Marlene Stavros: I'm single; I'm divorced. Uh, I have two daughters.  
31

32Cheryl McQuaid: [0:48] And where were you born and raised?  
33

34Marlene Stavros: I was born and raised around the Eaton Rapids area, which is about 30 – eh,  
35 it's probably about eight-, 18 miles from Lansing. South of here.  
36

37Cheryl McQuaid: [1:02] And your education level.  
38

39Marlene Stavros: I graduated out of high school in 1963. Um, went to work. Well, I  
40 shouldn't say I went to work; I was married when I come outta school, outta  
41 high school, and had, uh, a daughter toward the end of the year, November,  
42 and at the time, I wasn't working, but decided to go back to work in  
43 [sniffing] '65. So, circumstances. [throat clearing] But, uh, I worked at the  
44 Coca-Cola Plant for almost three and a half years and decided that I wanted  
45 something better, so I decided to – I, I'd heard GM was hiring, so I decided  
46 to stop, put my application in there.

1  
2 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:59] How did you hear they were hiring? Newspaper? Friends?  
3  
4 Marlene Stavros: Uh, just word of mouth; uh, some friends that I had. And so I stopped and,  
5 on my way to work one morning and put my application in and went on to  
6 work [coughing] and that was on a Thursday. On a Friday, I stopped again  
7 and put my application in again. Friday night, I got a call and they asked me  
8 if I'd had somebody put my application in for me and I told'm no, I'd been  
9 there [sniffing] Thursday morning and I'd been there Friday morning. I  
10 said, "I'm gonna be back in Monday morning." And so they asked me if I  
11 could come in for an interview that after-, that night at 7:00, which I did.  
12  
13 Cheryl McQuaid: [2:46] So there wasn't a long line to wait in? You just went right into the  
14 front door or?  
15  
16 Marlene Stavros: No, no. There was no line. I just, uh, went right in and put my application  
17 in. At that time, uh, employment was right down, uh, into the main lobby  
18 and up the steps, and I believe the – it was [Jerry 3:11]...  
19  
20 Cheryl McQuaid: [Brooks 3:11].  
21  
22 Marlene Stavros: ...Brooks, yeah. Thank you. Uh, Jerry Brooks was doing the interviews at  
23 that time, and...  
24  
25 Cheryl McQuaid: [3:22] You didn't say, but I have to ask you this question: uh, were you ever  
26 in the military?  
27  
28 Marlene Stavros: No, I wasn't.  
29  
30 Cheryl McQuaid: [3:28] And what did your parents do for a living?  
31  
32 Marlene Stavros: My dad worked at General Motors, 652. He had, uh, when he passed away,  
33 he had 10 years in there. He'd worked in a couple different places over  
34 there. Uh, the last place he was working was in the motor plant. I also had  
35 a older brother that worked over there, for about 3 years, in the motor plant.  
36 I always say he wasn't quite as smart as me 'cause he quit after 3 years.  
37 [laughter]  
38  
39 Cheryl McQuaid: [3:59] So we know what you did before ya hired in, and you said that they,  
40 um, you said they have you come in for an interview at 7:00 Friday night.  
41  
42 Marlene Stavros: Yes.  
43  
44 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:14] When did you [sniffing] start working?  
45

1Marlene Stavros: They asked me if I could start Monday mornin', and – or, well they my – if I  
2 wanted days or nights, and I told'm it really didn't matter, I just, I wanted to  
3 work, and so he asked me if I could come in on Monday, and I told him I  
4 would appreciate it if I could give my other employer a week's notice, and  
5 they said that that would be fine. So they set me up for work coming in on  
6 night shift a week after that, and – which I did. So I came in on October 21st  
7 of 1968.  
8

9Cheryl McQuaid: [4:51] And what was it like? Well, do you remember your first day walkin'  
10 in to go to your first job in the Plant? And where was that job?  
11

12Marlene Stavros: It was up on the B Line, and it was up in Hard Trim. Uh, at that time, that  
13 was called Hard Trim. Uh, I thought it was the biggest plant I'd ever been  
14 in. I think I asked directions three different times to get up there, 'cause it  
15 was on the 2nd Floor. And I can't really say that the job I had was hard; I  
16 mean, I – I don't know w-, there was a lotta up there that, in Hard Trim that  
17 I found out later were harder, but they put me on putting, uh, windshield  
18 clips on, uh, what they call now the Vehicle Identification Tab, I had to put  
19 those on, and I had to check the manifest to make sure that, uh, there was  
20 two other clips put on, and [sniffing] at that time, you were supposed to  
21 have a, I think it was a 3-day break-in period, and I was on the job for  
22 probably about 6 hours and the gentleman breakin' me in left. He said,  
23 "You don't need my help." And it – I picked up things. I mean, when I  
24 worked, I – ya know, it's a matter of usin' your mind and eyes. They, uh – I  
25 had – I worked with some super people. From the time I hired in here, I've  
26 always worked with really [coughing] [inaudible 6:38] people in, [coughing]  
27 people in the Department, uh, anybody breakin' ya in, uh, they were good,  
28 and you were supposed to be at that time, your boss – well, at any time, your  
29 boss would, uh, go by your work record to know, because I took a pay cut  
30 coming in from what I had been making, and your, it was up to your boss at  
31 that time to put you in for your pay raises or whatever, and like I say, I –  
32 they didn't even – the next day, the, the boss came around and he, uh, pulled  
33 a guy because he said I didn't need him, I was doin' fine. When I grabbed  
34 my first paycheck, I had full pay. I didn't, uh – he didn't put me in. He said  
35 didn't need to, to drop, to, ya know, withhold for that period.  
36

37Cheryl McQuaid: [7:46] 'Cause you were already a good employee.  
38

39Marlene Stavros: Yeah, I, I was honest. When I come in here, I told him, I come in not  
40 lookin' for just a job; I come in to work.  
41

42Cheryl McQuaid: And – Doug Rademacher.  
43

44Doug Rademacher: Marlene, you said a couple things here. You said you worked for Coca-  
45 Cola...  
46

1Marlene Stavros: Yes.  
2  
3Doug Rademacher: ...prior to coming in. [8:04] Had ya ever worked in an assembly plant of any  
4 sort prior to that?  
5  
6Marlene Stavros: No. I...  
7  
8Doug Rademacher: [8:10] So would ya please share that vision of walking into a place where  
9 there's just this continuous line of vehicles and musta been multitudes of  
10 people, can you describe what that felt like to see that?  
11  
12Marlene Stavros: Little scary. I mean, I – at Coke, I worked with a group a people not, I mean,  
13 a small group, and, and we did [sniffing] inspections and things like that, but  
14 nothin' like when you walk into, uh, an auto factory and see a long l-, I  
15 mean, that's all ya see are cars and people, and it was just – I was in awe. I  
16 was. I mean, it was amazing to me. And to see the assembly of, ya know,  
17 everything that went on that, uh, people did and worked together to get out a  
18 product, and I was amazed. I was just really amazed, because I had never,  
19 I'd never been in an assembly plant l-, ya know, this, this size, this  
20 magnitude. I really hadn't.  
21  
22Doug Rademacher: And you came from a small town, so.  
23  
24Marlene Stavros: Right. And I...  
25  
26Doug Rademacher: Okay.  
27  
28Marlene Stavros: ...and I had worked in a small factory there, and it was still nothing  
29 [coughing] like, like walking into Fisher Body. Like I say, I had to ask  
30 directions just to get up to the 2nd Floor. Uh, bec-, I mean, ya got stairways,  
31 elevators [sniffing], but you, ya know, it's – to f-, to find the, to get up to the  
32 2nd Floor and then find the right department, and once ya do that, I found  
33 out, though, you can, on your breaks and on lunchtime, you can really  
34 explore [laughing] so that ya don't get lost.  
35  
36Doug Rademacher: Okay. [10:09] You said you took a pay cut. So why did ya come to General  
37 Motors and Fisher Body if you knew you were takin' a pay cut? What was  
38 your, what was your drive there?  
39  
40Marlene Stavros: I didn't like bein' lied to. When I worked at Coke, I had worked myself  
41 from dealing with bottles on the line to – I'd done every job there;  
42 inspecting, filling, everything. I was on a fork truck, I was drivin' fork truck  
43 for the last year and a half, and they had a semi-drive, or semi-driving  
44 position come open, and I applied for it, I was told that I would – I had a  
45 very good chance a gettin' it, and I got my – went and applied for my  
46 license, and then the man didn't give it to me, because I was a woman.

1 They put the guy that was drivin' before back on, give him another chance.  
2 And needless to s-, needless to say, I think it really upset me. [laughter]  
3  
4 Doug Rademacher: So that was your work. Uh, you'd – also I heard you say that, uh, your father  
5 passed. Musta been early.  
6  
7 Marlene Stavros: Yes.  
8  
9 Doug Rademacher: [11:36] What did your mother do and how many siblings did ya have?  
10  
11 Marlene Stavros: I had a older brother and a younger sister, and our mother had always  
12 worked all her life. She was worked in, uh, what they call [inaudible 11:49],  
13 uh, pickling factory in Eaton Rapids. Uh, she worked there for almost 19  
14 years. So everybody in our family pretty much had worked, even, even  
15 back during the war, my folks worked in a factory; they worked what's now  
16 known as Horners Woolen Mills in Eaton Rapids, and they produced, uh,  
17 gun parts and things for the war, so. Factory was nothin', ya know, to our  
18 family. It was – we – ya know, they'd always worked in'm; they had, my  
19 folks had. Like I say, my brother, he went into al-, he also went into Olds'  
20 but he just didn't stay.  
21  
22 Doug Rademacher: [12:40] Okay, and on, one other question I have to ask is, uh, you said it was  
23 about 20 miles out of town of Lansing, so what was it like to drive, in those  
24 days, to the job back and forth to Lansing? Did you, uh, always travel  
25 alone? Did you come to work with a group of people and travel, uh, carpool  
26 or what was that like?  
27  
28 Marlene Stavros: Ya know, it wasn't bad, except in the winter. Highways were a little slick  
29 and a lotta snow back then. But, uh, always seemed to make it. Um, later  
30 on, uh, I was riding, uh, in the '70s I ha-, if I'd have car trouble, I would, I –  
31 my mother remarried and, uh, I rode with my stepdad, and so. He was also  
32 in Skilled Trades. My stepdad [inaudible 13:45] was, uh, [Jimmy Fisher  
33 13:47].  
34  
35 Doug Rademacher: [13:49] In the Fisher Plant?  
36  
37 Marlene Stavros: In the Fisher Plant.  
38  
39 Doug Rademacher: Huh.  
40  
41 Marlene Stavros: And so, uh, I rode with him until I could get my car fixed. [laughter] Then  
42 I'd, uh, be back drivin' by myself again.  
43  
44 Doug Rademacher: Okay.  
45  
46 Cheryl McQuaid: Jerri Smith?

1  
2 Jerri Smith: [14:03] Did you always work in the Trim Department when you were on the  
3 Line or did you work in Body or Paint at all or not?  
4  
5 Marlene Stavros: I never got to work in Body or Paint. I thought I was gonna. [sniffing] I, uh  
6 – when they had the big layoff, uh, I was off for 4 months, laid off for 4  
7 months, and then, uh, when I was brought back, I was told I was gonna  
8 come back into the Body Shop, which was fine. Uh, but then, uh, they had a  
9 lady on sick leave out of the, uh, Sealer Department, which is part a the  
10 Paint Department, and so they'd place me in there, and I was Utility in there,  
11 and I spent, uh, 'bout 6 months in the Sealer Department, and between there  
12 and the Bond-Rite, and the Bond-Rite, uh, was where the, just the bare jobs  
13 come through and you had to do, you had a gray substance that you had to  
14 put on the seams to seal'm before they went in, you had to, this, the main  
15 sealer put on'm, uh, by the people in the Sealer Department. So and I was  
16 only in there about 6 months and they called me back to Trim. So I spent – I  
17 was in Trim, other than that 6 months, I was in Trim probably the better part  
18 of the, the, little over 10 years before I went into Maintenance. And it  
19 wasn't that I didn't like Trim; I got bored. I, I had probably done just about  
20 every job in the Trim Department and I was on, uh, Repair when I, when  
21 the, they started takin' more people into the Maintenance Department, so I  
22 put my application in for Tool Repair.  
23  
24 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. [16:10] Marlene, how old were you when you hired into  
25 Fisher Body? [recorder clicking]  
26  
27 Marlene Stavros: Well, figuring down, I was 24. I'd a, I'd a – was gonna be 25 in December  
28 of that year, and seemed like the right thing to do at the time, and after all  
29 these years, I'm glad I made that decision to come to Fisher Body.  
30  
31 Cheryl McQuaid: [16:35] And when you were, when you first hired in, you were 24, on the  
32 second shift, how many children did you have at home at that time?  
33  
34 Marlene Stavros: Two daughters.  
35  
36 Cheryl McQuaid: Two daughters? [16:44] Was that hard for'm?  
37  
38 Marlene Stavros: Yes. Uh, we basically done a lot – my daughters and I done, uh, everything  
39 together, uh, whether it was a vacation, trip, be at home, go get groceries,  
40 whatever. We spent, when I was there, I was workin' day and then I was  
41 gonna be there at night. So this was kind of a new ballgame to them. Uh,  
42 did I have major problems? No. Uh, they were good girls. Yeah. They knew  
43 it was a job. I had a good babysitter, and so everything, everything went  
44 good.  
45

1 Cheryl McQuaid: Excellent. [17:34] And what kind of, uh, as far as the people that you  
2 worked with, how many other women worked around you or, um, Hispanics  
3 or – could you tell us a little bit about the culture that you hired into?  
4

5 Marlene Stavros: I worked, in our group, with mostly men. The majority of ‘m were guys. Um,  
6 there was some other women. The majority a the women at that time were  
7 working in, uh, the Sealer Room in the Paint Department. Uh, we had very  
8 few, very few in the, in the Trim Department. Uh, I think that there was –  
9 that I know of, there was at least 3 others, uh, but in our Department, it was,  
10 [background conversation] it was all men, [background conversation] and  
11 [background conversation] I worked – ya know, I didn’t have a problem  
12 with it.  
13

14 Cheryl McQuaid: [18:38] So you never felt as though you were treated differently because you  
15 were a woman...  
16

17 Marlene Stavros: No.  
18

19 Cheryl McQuaid: ...in the Trim Department?  
20

21 Marlene Stavros: No.  
22

23 Cheryl McQuaid: [18:46] Did you...  
24

25 Marlene Stavros: Not at all.  
26

27 Cheryl McQuaid: ...did you ever have any pranks played on you or did you play any pranks on  
28 any other people? Was there any horseplay going on?  
29

30 Marlene Stavros: [background conversation] All the time. That’s what made the nights go  
31 good. Uh, you might pick your tool up that you’re usin’ for puttin’ in,  
32 puttin’ a clip on with and might have gum on it. [laughter] I mean, I mean  
33 they were good pranks. They weren’t nothin’, ya know – or you might have  
34 to look for the tool. I mean, it was just – and it was sometimes, not all the  
35 time, but it was sometimes. But, uh, yeah, it was nothin’, and yeah, y-, the –  
36 after ya get used to workin’ here for a while, pranks were play-, they were  
37 both ways. Because it just, it was a way of fitting in. Uh, [background  
38 conversation] I think the best thing was, uh, workin’ on the Line and, uh,  
39 you looked out for each other. Uh, I went – I wasn’t on the, the clip job very  
40 long when I, I went to spring, uh, [Detner 19:54], and I worked with a  
41 gentleman that he was up there in age, but he would have a lotta trouble,  
42 and, and after a while a breathin’ that stuff, he’d get a nosebleed.  
43

44 Cheryl McQuaid: Yeah.  
45

1Marlene Stavros: You'd tell him, "Go take care of it. You just – you know, your head was  
2 already in the job, you just sprayed both sides," and somebody on the guy  
3 workin' next to him would put the Detner in after I sprayed, and ya know, it  
4 worked out. Uh, if I got to coughin', needed a drink, he sprayed both sides,  
5 his head was in the job. I mean, it was – you really helped each other, and it  
6 – you always, I always worked – that's why I always worked with a good  
7 group a people. Uh, I think as the years went on and there was so many  
8 changes, uh, and they ran both lines up there, one line the A Line and one,  
9 one the B, and you was runnin' one on one side and one on the other, and  
10 then you had one downstairs for, I mean, the Paint Department things were  
11 down there before the new Paint Department went in. Uh, so you, you had  
12 two lines runnin' up there. It was – so you seen a lotta people.  
13

14Cheryl McQuaid: Doug Rademacher.  
15

16Doug Rademacher: You say there was two lines. Can you describe – uh, again, we started out  
17 and talked about that [coughing] ya hired in and saw that long line of  
18 vehicles. Now, that's a line.  
19

20Marlene Stavros: [Right 21:39].  
21

22Doug Rademacher: [21:40] Uh, what was the difference between the two lines? What's this A  
23 and B thing that you were talkin' about?  
24

25Marlene Stavros: You had one, one product, like on the B Line you run, uh, the Olds' Ninety-  
26 Eight, at that time, and then the Eighty-Eight, and then you had, uh, a  
27 different product. Uh, we had a convertible line that we ran where that had,  
28 uh, [for a while 22:16]. We had a Vista Cruiser wagon line that we, that  
29 also was up there that run. And so in between, you had, ya know – this is,  
30 this is hard.  
31

32Doug Rademacher: Well I, [laughter] I wanted you to describe to people just – y-, the cars  
33 weren't the same. [22:40] There was just...  
34

35Marlene Stavros: No.  
36

37Doug Rademacher: ...all kinds a different responsibilities to each different vehicle, correct?  
38

39Marlene Stavros: Exactly. Yeah, you had – and, and you had, at that time, a lot of [coughing]  
40 [inaudible 22:51] buildup for the people workin' on the lines for what they  
41 had to put onto each one a the different cars. Uh, your – it was a lot more  
42 congested. It, it, it – back then, back in those, in those, in that time, that  
43 year-span. Because the lines were full, your parts were there, but you might  
44 go off your platform acrossed a short aisle of, say, 10 feet, and you've got  
45 another assembly line running right there. Uh, and the way that they, they  
46 snaked around the curves and, and then they went back up into what they



1 call that Marshal-, the Marshalling Area in [5 Second 23:48], uh, to go over  
2 to Shipping. Uh, it was – the lines were changes for comin’ up outta Body  
3 Shop, uh, which at that time, I didn’t know where Body Shop was and how  
4 they got up there, but I knew that we had’m to work on. [laughter] Ya know,  
5 I mean, so.  
6  
7 Doug Rademacher: [24:16] So the, uh, the place was daunting to, just to imagine, uh, the  
8 differences of the parts and, uh, one vehicle would come at you and then the  
9 next one might need different parts and, uh, did you ever...  
10  
11 Marlene Stavros: Yes.  
12  
13 Doug Rademacher: ...did you ever have a chance where you visited what they called the Body  
14 Shop? And what was it like down there?  
15  
16 Marlene Stavros: I’m, I got really, really acquainted with the Body Shop after I went into  
17 Maintenance. Our, uh, crib was down on the 1st Floor, Main Aisle, and we  
18 serviced, even though we were called “Tool Repair” and serviced all, all the  
19 tools for the line, we also did a number, I mean, quite a number of jobs,  
20 because we also serviced automatic drills for the Body Shop, we had  
21 balancers that hung up that the spot-weld guns were hanging on, and so we  
22 would go out, if we had a balancer break in the Body Shop, we would have  
23 to go out and change that balancer. We’d have the line down while we were  
24 doing that, if it was an on-line, where the line was moving, for safety  
25 purposes. Uh, and we [sniffing] had, we had areas where there was pits  
26 where you had to go down into the pit, and we also people working down in  
27 there that had tool-, air tools, that maybe they put the brackets on for the  
28 fender. And so, we would go down into the pits, we might adjust automatic  
29 drills that drilled the holes for the, for the, uh, brackets for the fender. We  
30 also would, uh, do the ones that, uh, [coughing] had balancers where they  
31 were havin’ to do spot-welding on, on any part of the car, uh, we would be  
32 in the pit to make that adjustment with our crank. And so, we were – I got  
33 well-acquainted with the Body Shop.  
34  
35 Doug Rademacher: Oka-...  
36  
37 Marlene Stavros: Uh, you had s-...  
38  
39 Doug Rademacher: You’re [inaudible 26:36].  
40  
41 Marlene Stavros: Well, well, s-...  
42  
43 Doug Rademacher: [26:37] You said you’re well-acquainted. I wa-, what I want to get at here is  
44 you’d work in Trim and that was [inaudible 26:45] line. What’s the picture,  
45 for this, for whoever listens to this, what’s it like to see a body shop? What,  
46 uh, what does that look like?

1  
2 Marlene Stavros: At that time, it was dirty, and all you seen was a jungle of spot-weld guns  
3 and people handling those spot-weld guns. Um, we had gates that, I mean,  
4 heavy gates that brought parts around to people. Uh, maybe two guys would  
5 have to pick up, uh, literally the whole side of the car – it'd be the, uh, side  
6 frame – and place it on, and then – or place in th-, in to where then they  
7 could s-, spot-weld it on. Uh, it was, it, it was nothin' like the Trim Shop.  
8 Everybody out there was required to have, you had hats on, I mean, you had  
9 coveralls, shop coats, steel-toed boots. Uh, Trim was always clean. I mean,  
10 you'd go in in short-sleeve, shorts; not in the Body Shop. Body Shop, you  
11 were well-protected from the sparks, because you'd see guys walkin' around  
12 in the summertime when it was so hot with all these holes [laughter] that  
13 they'd gotten hit with sparks from the spot-weld guns and things. And we  
14 also at that time had a, a Solder Booth where they did all the soldering on all  
15 the joints for the, for the cars. And then you had a Grind Booth, and the  
16 protect-, the things that you had to wear in there was for the ears and  
17 whatnot, and your f-, your shields for your eyes because a the grinding goin'  
18 on. And we would also have to go in there, 'cause we'd have to keep their  
19 oilers filled and adjust the balancers, also, for – or change one if one broke,  
20 for anything in, uh, the booths where they doin' any a the grinding. So the  
21 Body Shop probably kept a lot busier, [throat clearing] at times, than the  
22 Trim Shop for the Tool Repair group because of the, we had floor grinders,  
23 uh, for maintenance people, we had balancers and grinders and automatic  
24 drills for the line people, and there was as many people working in the Body  
25 Shop, to m-, ya know, I would think, really close, as there was in any other  
26 department at, at Fisher Body.  
27  
28 Doug Rademacher: [29:40] Can I ask you, looking at a job, you saw the person. Can you  
29 describe the size of a spot-welder gun?  
30  
31 Marlene Stavros: We had one called Big Bertha. [laughter] John, remember Big Bertha?  
32  
33 John Fedewa: Yup.  
34  
35 Marlene Stavros: That gun was big, and it didn't matter...  
36  
37 Doug Rademacher: [30:05] Was it as big as the person?  
38  
39 Marlene Stavros: Oh it's bigger. And so, ya know, it, it just depended sometimes, uh, when  
40 you walked in, you, you'd be amazed at this person, ya know, really h-,  
41 manhandlin' this gun to get it around where it's got to be to spot-weld this  
42 job, and you wouldn't think – I mean, there was times I didn't think the  
43 person could move the gun. The guns were just – and they were, it was –  
44 they were on balancers when I come in. Uh, I've had some really good  
45 partners, and my partner told me that when he came in, they didn't always  
46 have, uh, balancers on these guns. They literally had to bodily pick them up,

1 and if, when they were real heavy, the heavier of the spot-weld guns, there  
2 would be two of these guys pickin'm up, and they were steel. I mean, they  
3 were solid for spot-weld guns. There was nothing light about'm. They  
4 weren't hollow tubing; they were, they were, the shanks and things were s-,  
5 solid steel, and which I found out when we had to change a balancer because  
6 we would have to literally lift that gun up off a the balancer, off the hook,  
7 and set it on the floor to change the balancer, and then we would have to lift  
8 that gun back up and put it back on the balancer hook. So they were, they  
9 were very heavy, and then you had others that, that weren't, but I mean, they  
10 probably ranged in – let's say weight-wise you had guns that, that weighed  
11 anywhere from probably 30 pounds up to I'd say 280 to 300 pounds, and on,  
12 on those large guns, we would have balancers that would ta-, we would  
13 call'm a Size 30, and they would reach 300 pounds, pick up 300 pounds and  
14 they'd be a 3-springer, and those balancers weighed right around 85 pounds.  
15 It would take two of us to, to go up a ladder and change'm out and then to  
16 bring'm down.  
17  
18 Doug Rademacher: [32:35] So this balancer was something that assisted the labor, the,  
19 [coughing] the worker to, to man-...  
20  
21 Marlene Stavros: It was...  
22  
23 Doug Rademacher: ...to maneuver this tool...  
24  
25 Marlene Stavros: Right, it was...  
26  
27 Doug Rademacher: ...[while 32:44]...  
28  
29 Marlene Stavros: ...hooked onto the, the spot-weld gun so that he, he just could reach over  
30 and, and unhook it off his bench, and the weight a that gun would be most of  
31 it on that balancer when it was, uh, adjusted properly. Then he'd just bring it  
32 down and into his, where he had to spot-weld.  
33  
34 Doug Rademacher: [33:08] Now I wanna go a [little place 33:09] – now, was this job on the  
35 assembly line?  
36  
37 Marlene Stavros: Yes.  
38  
39 Doug Rademacher: And how [sniffing] many cars – again, the line runs forever.  
40  
41 Marlene Stavros: Yes.  
42  
43 Doug Rademacher: [33:18] How many were we running, how many vehicles would run in an  
44 hour, on average?  
45  
46 Marlene Stavros: 60.

1  
2Doug Rademacher: Just tryin' to develop...  
3  
4Marlene Stavros: I'd say...  
5  
6Doug Rademacher: ...a picture.  
7  
8Marlene Stavros: ...yeah, [sniffing] I would, I would have to say that even back then we were,  
9 we were probably running somewhere [yawning] around 60, 62, sixty –  
10 possibly 65 [murmuring] jobs and hour.  
11  
12Doug Rademacher: So one a minute with this huge contraption.  
13  
14Marlene Stavros: Yeah.  
15  
16Doug Rademacher: [33:57] Did – and you'd worked up in Trim. Did you – you know people  
17 who worked their whole lives in Body Shop, I'm sure as people stayed in  
18 Trim their whole lives if they – so did you gain a respect for this particular  
19 group a people that worked in the Body Shop?  
20  
21Marlene Stavros: Very much so. Very much so. [sniffing] It was a lot hotter down there to  
22 work, a lot heavier, a lot dirtier work. Uh, to me, it was even, even more  
23 dangerous because of, you're down there, you're workin' with raw metal.  
24 You're actually assembling the, the body itself in the Body Shop, and then  
25 by the time it, uh, it gets to Trim, you've got a few, a few parts, the tops a  
26 your doors, that, uh, are sharp, but not, nothing like in the Body Shop.  
27 You're, you're, you're literally, they were literally working with raw metal,  
28 and it, uh – putting all the parts on, all the, all the pieces that, uh, say it  
29 would have to be, uh, your clips, uh, putting your door panels together,  
30 puttin' the roof on the car, and these people were wearing arm shields. And  
31 that's why, ya know, they basically had to have the car hearts or the  
32 coveralls, the shop coats and the arm protections and things on, because they  
33 were workin', to me, in the most dangerous part a the Plant, and – as far as  
34 being around the raw metal. And yeah, I, I, I had a great respect, 'cause I  
35 figured if they called, they needed somethin', that they needed it now and  
36 not yesterday. Yeah, it's – if one a them balancers got out of adjustment,  
37 that's a lotta weight to have to stand there and lift doin', ya know, sixty-  
38 some jobs an hour. You don't wanna, ya didn't want to do it on one, let  
39 alone 15 or 20, and so.  
40  
41Doug Rademacher: [36:14] Was there any women? Was it...  
42  
43Marlene Stavros: Yes.  
44  
45Doug Rademacher: ...men? Was it minorities? Who got those jobs? And did they get – the pay  
46 scale, was it different than Trim?

1  
2 Marlene Stavros: I don't know. I, I can't answer the one on the pay scale because I never ask  
3 anybody their pay. Ya know, I always figured that that was their, uh – they  
4 knew what they got, that was their business. Uh, I know welders usually got  
5 more in the Plant. To me, they shoulda got more, whether they – I think they  
6 did, but I couldn't say for sure, [sniffing] in all honesty. Uh, there was  
7 women. As far as who got put on what job, uh, like the rest a the plant, it  
8 went, uh, seniority and if somebody was brought in, new hires, whatever,  
9 they were always placed on open jobs in the Body Shop, just like Trim or  
10 Paint, anywhere else. And so, I seen some, I seen some pretty – yes, there  
11 was, with the women in the Body Shop, I seen some pretty tough lookin'  
12 gals out there that, uh, were on different jobs, and I've seen some smaller  
13 lady-, gals out there that – ya know, and it – but the one thing that didn't  
14 matter. I mean, uh, they coulda placed, uh, a small-built woman [coughing]  
15 on a, on a spot-welder [coughing] and I'll guarantee that I never seen a time  
16 that if she was havin' difficulty that there wasn't guys all around her helpin'  
17 till she got used to the gun, got – showed her different ways to use it and do  
18 the job; until she figured out her way of wantin' to do it, she always had  
19 help.  
20  
21 Jerri Smith: Yes, Jerri Smith. [38:18] Um, I was wondering, when you went into  
22 Maintenance, um, did you have to go through school to learn how to do the  
23 Tool Repair and all that or did you just in and learn from the other people  
24 that were already in it?  
25  
26 Marlene Stavros: Uh, probably a good way to answer that question is that I, I've always been  
27 pretty well, pretty good with my hands, and so, most a the things I could tear  
28 apart and repair. Uh, yes, we – I had to go, I had to take schooling. At that  
29 time, we had to take, uh, almost 4,000 hours of classes, of – for our  
30 schooling. We went, I went to LCC. You could not, uh, go during workin'  
31 time, and when I went into Maintenance, they put me on days for my – at  
32 that, at that time, well, you're called an EIT. And so, I had to, I worked all  
33 day and went home and then I went to school at night to get my classes. You  
34 had to take, uh, math, welding, blueprints; uh, there was a variety. They, uh  
35 – that was our requirement for 4 years, until we got what they [inaudible  
36 39:48], and – which claimed you got your seniority, and after that 4 years,  
37 then I was shipped to nights, and after another 4 years, I made [papers  
38 crumpling] journeyman status, but I found later with the Tool Repair, you  
39 weren't given a card. We were not a, they were not a card-holding trade.  
40 Um, there was some things that I had never seen, and I had a – there was a  
41 couple guys in there that was real good that if I had a problem with  
42 something, uh, with a larger grinder or whatever, they showed me, uh, more  
43 or less what I was doin' wrong till I could, ya know, get it figured out on  
44 repairing. Most a the things are, you can, you can figure, but you've got  
45 some tools that take different sized push rods, some take a push rod, some  
46 don't. I mean, they're just all different, and, uh, I think that the worst

scenario in, when I went to Tool Repair, it was so different from working with the people on the Line, and not for the better. It's like proving yourself day after day because you're a woman in t-, in a d-, in a, in a man's world. And when they saw that I wasn't lazy, I could do my job, uh, that [banging] they, uh, ya know, they kinda, they changed in that, that respect, but I worked with a lot of older gentlemen that were from the old school; it wasn't good. They, uh – I had to share a bench, matter of fact, with one a them gentlemen, and he worked afternoons, I worked days. I'd have a tool tore apart. Well, when you got a, when you got a, a call come in to go out and do a troubleshooting, you just left everything on the bench and you went out and did your troubleshooting, and, uh, most of you know that, uh, when, uh, Second Shift starts, they usually s-, come in at, you have a half-hour hour to – ya know, they start at 3:00. So you have, ya know, you should have everything picked up. Well this gentleman would – they started at 3:30. This gentleman would come in [murmuring] and I would find everything that I had been workin' on that day shoved up in a little corner; parts, tools, rags, everything. After the third day a that, comin' back in from troub-, because we had a lotta trouble calls [laughter], and, uh, I did that for about three days, and, uh, I come in and I got all my stuff off the bench and I took all a his stuff and scooted it right up in that corner where mine had been, and when he got mad at me, I got in his face so bad that I told him he could either come in at his own, at the right time and just go set at another bench till I got back to clean up my stuff, but don't ever touch it again. It was just the way it had to be. This guy did not like, I'm sorry, he did not like women in the trades. So that made it, it made it pretty rough there for – it got – it was bad enough that that first year, I was ready to go back to the Line. I had some wonderful people out there that I worked with; I had never worked with some-, somethin' like I'd been into there, for that period a time, and it kinda settled out, and after that, why, I really didn't have, I didn't think, anymore, I, I didn't really have any more trouble with the guys in, in, in the Tool Repair. They w-, they were a pretty good buncha guys after that.

Let'm know where you stan-, stood and.

Yup. Yup. Well, I think when they found out that I could do the work, I held my own, I dis-, ya know, I didn't expect somebody else to do my job and get my pay. I – ya know, and I never have, so. They, uh, [door closing] I think they – as I got a respect for them more, they got more a respect for me, and – but there was still times, and even in Maintenance, that the management would try to overlook a women when it come time for that job switch or, or something different to happen. [sniffing] Uh, in our group, it was like the window job. When, when the seniority person retired, the next person in line on that shift would take that job, and it'd always been that way from day one that I'd gone in there, and I was told that it'd [sniffing] always been that way, and, uh, when I was on second shift, uh, and our window man was

1 gonna retire, the next man in line said he did not want it. Well, that put me  
 2 in line for it and, sorry to say, I had, uh, somebody from management tell  
 3 me that they could put – they didn't have to put me on that window job, that  
 4 they could me in the – they could put the lowest EIT person in there on it if  
 5 they wanted to. And that really, it kinda hurt because I had already gone  
 6 through all the training for the computer and everything, so. And I was  
 7 always up helpin' anybody with when they, if they were on break or  
 8 whatever, you just kinda helped each other because it was a small group  
 9 doin' a lotta jobs, and so you always helped do whatever. If somebody'd  
 10 come in needing somethin', you, you got, you fixed a tool and sent'm back  
 11 to the Line. We had a lotta people come in, they had certain ones that they  
 12 liked in there to work on their stuff. They'd bring it right into our crib, go  
 13 right to the person's bench, whoever it was, and they'd fix it and give it back  
 14 to'm. The only thing I d-, I didn't like was if somebody out on the Line tried  
 15 to repair their own, and then it might take a couple days for'm to get it back.  
 16 [laughter] They don't wanna do it again. Because the main thing was they'd  
 17 lose parts. If we didn't have'm, uh, it took a little longer. Even if we had'm,  
 18 it took a look a-, little longer if they, if they tore it apart. [laughter] Quick  
 19 lessons. [laughter] Yeah. But it worked out. So, so there was still, even  
 20 though in there we got, there was a close-knit, there was a still a lotta  
 21 problems with management doin' what they doin'.  
 22  
 23 Jerri Smith: [47:06] Did it, did it work out that you ended up gettin' a job or did...  
 24  
 25 Marlene Stavros: No. No, I didn't get it.  
 26  
 27 Jerri Smith: Just because management didn't want a woman in there.  
 28  
 29 Marlene Stavros: Exactly.  
 30  
 31 John Fedewa: Hm.  
 32  
 33 Marlene Stavros: Yup. And so I stayed on the bunch, I did trouble calls. I still helped out if  
 34 the guy needed help on the window. And the guy that, they actually put the  
 35 guy on there that didn't want it, and so, he would do bench work, and when  
 36 he was off, ya know, break or whatever, I'd go out and help, you know, I'd  
 37 do the window for him. I'd put p-, he didn't like runnin' the computer, and I  
 38 knew that, so when it got time to put all the, the, the, the parts that we'd  
 39 used and, and ordering, I'd just go up and do the computer work for'm.  
 40 They didn't know the wiser; they thought he'd done it. No biggie. [laughter]  
 41  
 42 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. [48:04] Marlene, what is one of your best memories of  
 43 Fisher Body?  
 44  
 45 Marlene Stavros: Mm. [background conversation] That'd be hard, because I've got a lotta  
 46 good ones. [background conversation] And I think my, my – probably my

1 best memory was when I was a Production Worker on the Line, workin'  
2 with a group up in, uh, Hardware Trim puttin' in regulators. [background  
3 conversation]  
4

5Cheryl McQuaid: You put in regulators?  
6

7Marlene Stavros: Mm-hm.  
8

9Cheryl McQuaid: That was a rough job.  
10

11Marlene Stavros: Mm-hm. Those were, those were the heavy ones. You put bolts in'm. Ya  
12 didn't put rivets in'm; you put bolts in'm. And we would switch around up  
13 there – I mean, you'd a had to been in our group [background conversation],  
14 because we would literally [background conversation] we could do either  
15 side the Line. We would switch. I mean, we'd do our job for an hour  
16 [background conversation] and then we'd switch side-to-side and then we'd  
17 switch the people on the front. There was 4 people at that time done  
18 regulators. And it was, it was a lotta fun. Uh, we joked around a lot and the  
19 only thing our boss told us: "Don't ship nothin'." [laughter] 'Cause you're  
20 gonna be down there pickin' it up." [laughter] And we, and we didn't.  
21 Matter of fact, we did our own, uh, [background conversation] we did  
22 repair, if somebody behind got, got behind behind us, why, we had a screw  
23 gun there as well as our gun for the bolts, and so, we would take and just, ya  
24 know, we might do couple screws in the feather for them, ya know, to get  
25 them caught back up, 'cause we did feathers, we did guar-, feather guards,  
26 we did regulators. And I think the thing I liked, too, was, ya know, in – but  
27 that was my best. The people in, in Hard Trim, I, I liked workin' with  
28 Production people. I liked workin' with people, period. Uh, if our line went  
29 down early and the other line was still runnin' and it, uh – I'd go over to the  
30 A Line, which was called the A Line back then, [background conversation]  
31 uh, which eventually become the C Line, I believe, [background  
32 conversation], uh, I'd go over and set windshields and back glass.  
33 [background conversation] Uh, they'd have somebody'd wanna go home in  
34 8 hours [background conversation], go over there. That was the nice thing,  
35 too, about workin' in Trim or workin' with Production; you could work  
36 overtime [background conversation] and so. It was – it helped.  
37

38Cheryl McQuaid: [50:43] Marlene, I know that we could get a lot more out of you [sniffing]  
39 but we need to close up this interview, and is there anything you want to  
40 share with us before we stop the interview?  
41

42Marlene Stavros: The, the only thing that I – I was, I spent a lotta times on night shift, and the  
43 only thing that I would ever do different is – and tell the people that  
44 anybody that has children growing up and they're on second shift, if there's  
45 any way that they could possibly go to a midnight shift or a day shift while  
46 their kids are bein' raised, do it. Uh, I have two wonderful daughters and



1 I've got three wonderful grandchildren, but it, it w-, I think it got harder on  
2 them as they got older. Me-, 'cause I spent – I could not get on any other  
3 shift. I, I literally was stuck on second shift all the time they were growin'  
4 up. And I – and to answer a real quick question that you had asked me  
5 earlier: [sniffing] Uh, as they got older and they had programs in school, I  
6 had, uh, I had some wonderful bosses too. They would let me, ya know, get  
7 out to go to those programs and, and come back, or I could just put in for the  
8 half a night or whatever. Uh, so, but that was a, that was a biggie with me. I  
9 wish that, at that time – that's probably the only time that I could, I wished I  
10 could change. But they, they're still good. They got wonderful jobs, so. Ya  
11 know, it does work out in the end, but you miss, you miss a lot, and I think  
12 that, ya know, they, they need things, whether it's supervision or help with  
13 things, more in the afternoon period than they do at the, ya know, durin' the  
14 day. So.  
15  
16 Cheryl McQuaid: Well, Marlene, thank you very much.  
17  
18 Doug Rademacher: [We all 52:44]...  
19  
20 Jerri Smith: Yes.  
21  
22 Doug Rademacher: ...thank you very much and we – if you'd have the time, we'd like to another  
23 interview with you and continue this one.  
24  
25 Jerri Smith: Yes...  
26  
27 Marlene Stavros: All right.  
28  
29 Jerri Smith: ...and congratulations for being a woman in Trades [laughter] and that  
30 you've stuck it out and...  
31  
32 Marlene Stavros: Thank you.  
33  
34 Jerri Smith: ...stayed with it.  
35  
36 Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you.  
37  
38 Marlene Stavros: I think that was a – my dad always said, "Don't go into shop; you'll never  
39 make it," and I wished he was here to see that I had almost 38 years.  
40  
41 Cheryl McQuaid: 38. Wow.  
42  
43 Marlene Stavros: It'll be October. It...  
44  
45 Cheryl McQuaid: Congratulations.  
46

1Marlene Stavros: ...it'll be 38.  
2  
3Jerri Smith: Yeah.  
4  
5Marlene Stavros: So.  
6  
7Jerri Smith: We think you've done great, so.  
8  
9Marlene Stavros: Thank you.  
10  
11Doug Rademacher: Enjoy.  
12  
13Marlene Stavros: Thank you.  
14  
15  
16/rt