

**Garry Bernath discusses his career as a production worker, union activist,
member of the bargaining committee, and UAW Local 602 President
at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**

1
2
3
4
5
6 Doug Rademacher: Hello. This is the Fisher Body Historical Team. We're interviewing,
7 today, Garry Bernath. It's Tuesday, March 7, 2006, and we are at the
8 UAW Local 602 Frank Dryer Greenhouse for this interview. We will go
9 around the room and identify everyone that will be in the interview.
10
11 Gary Judy: Gary Judy.
12
13 Earl Nicholson, Sr.: Earl Nicholson.
14
15 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid.
16
17 Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter.
18
19 Doug Rademacher: And I'm Doug Rademacher. [00:29] Gerry, would you please say your
20 name and spell it for the record?
21
22 Garry Bernath: Garry with 2 Rs, G-A-R-R-Y; Bernath, B-E-R-N-A-T-H.
23
24 Doug Rademacher: [0:41] What is your address?
25
26 Garry Bernath: 7677 St. Clair Road, Elsie, Michigan, 48831.
27
28 Doug Rademacher: And, tell me, do you, uh, tell us a little bit about, [1:02] are you married?
29
30 Garry Bernath: Yes, uh, wife, Sidney and, uh, 2 children.
31
32 Doug Rademacher: Two children, what are...
33
34 Garry Bernath: Two daughters, uh, [Ashley 1:10] and [Rachel 1:11].
35
36 Doug Rademacher: Okay. And, can you tell me, [1:14] what is your education background?
37
38 Garry Bernath: Well, uh, checkered, I would say. I've had a lotta, lotta college. Never
39 completed college. Uh, went, took a year's leave of absence when I was,
40 uh, educational leave of absence when I was at Fisher Body in 1978.
41 Went to college for a year, uh, in and out. A lot of labor education classes
42 due to my involvement in the union and, uh, then I did complete a 2-year,
43 uh, program with MSU, uh, labor concept program. Uh, was the first
44 graduating class out of that when they began that program.
45
46 Doug Rademacher: Okay, thank you. [1:51] And do you have any military and service?

1
2Garry Bernath: Yeah, I did 2 years, uh, in the United States Marine Corps.
3
4Doug Rademacher: Can you tell me [1:58] where were you born and raised?
5
6Garry Bernath: Uh, St. John's, Michigan, was the hospital I was born in and reside, still
7 reside, uh, lived my whole life in, uh, a small farm community, Elsie,
8 Michigan, about, uh, I'd say 30 miles north of, uh, Lansing.
9
10Doug Rademacher: Well, you kinda went into my next question. [2:18] What did your parents
11 do?
12
13Garry Bernath: Uh, my father, uh, did a variety of jobs. Everything from, uh, shoe
14 salesman at Montgomery Wards, uh, a now-defunct, uh, department store.
15 Uh, he worked at Consumer's Power, uh, in the late '60s. Back before you
16 had to have a college education to be an insurance salesman, he hired into,
17 uh, to be an insurance salesman in Elsie, uh, with State Farm and worked
18 at that job 'til he was 72 and retired. My mother did a variety. She, she
19 worked in, uh, a small factory in Owosso, Michigan, and then, uh, hired
20 into the school system and was a, uh, head cook in, uh, the E.E. Knight
21 Elementary School for, oh, I think she did that for probably about 25, 30
22 years.
23
24Doug Rademacher: Okay...
25
26Garry Bernath: A member of the operating and engineering union.
27
28Doug Rademacher: Well, congratulations on that. [3:16] Would you share with us what you
29 did before you hired in at Fisher Body?
30
31Garry Bernath: Uh, actually, I'd worked a variety of jobs when I was goin' to school. Uh,
32 worked in a funeral home, uh, Carter Funeral Home in Elsie, Michigan.
33 Uh, then from there, I went to, uh, a company called Eugene Welding.
34 Uh, they actually made the, and welded the racks, the storage racks that
35 you would see in an automotive factory. Uh, I hired in as a janitor but, uh,
36 back in them days, uh, they, that wasn't quite what I, I did. If they needed
37 me on a line in the paint line or loadin' up the, the s, the racks into, into the
38 paint assembly line, I'd do that, which I didn't mind as a high school kid.
39 While I knew it was against the law, uh, they also was, was kind enough to
40 pay me that rate so that was big bucks for a high school kid versus the
41 janitor's, uh, rate and, uh, did that and, actually, that began my, my interest
42 in the union. We tried to get the Teamsters in there, was a part of that to
43 the point of actually, as a kid, [laughter] foolishly ar, joining arms and
44 layin' down in front of semis that wanted to come into the place while we
45 did, I guess what would be phrased, a wildcat strike because we didn't

1 have a union yet, didn't have recognition, but I think it was, like I say, I
2 was an experienced and that stuck with me my whole life.
3
4Doug Rademacher: Okay. We're gonna go into the Fisher Body a little bit. [4:47] Would you
5 tell us, why did you come to Fisher Body?
6
7Garry Bernath: Well, it was kinda odd. After, uh, uh, I knew, uh, factory work at, at, at
8 my young age, uh, that bein' 18, havin' had a belly full of it from the age
9 of 16, uh, I say, at, at Eugene Welding, wasn't really somethin' I aspired
10 to. Uh, wanted to go on to college and, and get a college education. Uh,
11 come from a large family. Uh, the, the well was dry as my father put it,
12 suggested I join the Marine Corps, which I did and, and for the sole
13 purpose of the GI Bill. Back then, you could get a full ride at, at schools.
14 Uh, they'd pay ya for doin' 2 years and they'd pay ya a monthly stipend for
15 going to school. Back then, it was, I think 410 bucks, and, uh, I would
16 receive that every month goin' to college, so that sounded like a good
17 program. Uh, I got discharged in, uh, July of '76. Uh, my uncle, Joe,
18 worked over here at Fisher Body and, uh, [laughter] he came over after I
19 got discharged and said, "Hey, uh, they're hirin' at Fisher Body." Uh,
20 again, goin' and joining a factory life was not appealing to me. Uh, he
21 said, "Well, I'll bring you an app." And, and even back then, I thought,
22 "Well, who would hire somebody that didn't even bother comin' in and
23 puttin' in their own application?" My uncle, much to my surprise – I said,
24 "Yeah, yeah, go ahead and do that."
25
26 My uncle, much to my surprise, brought me that app the next day and said,
27 "Hey, Garry, fill it out." I'm livin' down in the basement of my father's,
28 havin' a good time just bein' out of the military, gettin' signed up for
29 college, thinkin', again, that workin' in a factory was the farthest thing
30 from my mind and, again, thinkin', "Who the hell would hire me to begin
31 with if I don't even go in line and, and put in my app?" Filled out the app.
32 To make a long story short, 2 days later I get a call to come to Fisher
33 Body. Uh, several things played into that. My uncle, uh, knew, uh, Jeff –
34 and I forget Jeff's name, but he was one that was, did all the hiring back
35 then, Fisher Body or General Motors I should say. I, it was always Fisher
36 Body to me, probably all ways will be. But back then, Fisher Body hired,
37 had their own personnel people doin' the hiring, not like they do
38 nowadays. And, my uncle knew Jeff and, uh, handed the app. That
39 played a big part into me gettin' called in I believe. And also, back in the
40 '70s after the war, the Vietnam War, they had a big push for hiring the
41 vets, which probably jumped me to the top of the hire list, too, so kind of a
42 strange story. I never even showed my face but, but got a job and, and uh,
43 y'know, here I am today.
44
45Doug Rademacher: Well, you talked a little bit about working in what sounded like some
46 factory life there a little bit early on.

1Garry Bernath: Mm-hm.
2
3Doug Rademacher: [7:33] What was your hire-in date?
4
5Garry Bernath: Uh, at Fisher Body, it was, uh, September 3,1976. I'll be hittin' my 30
6 here this year.
7
8Doug Rademacher: So, I'd like you to share with us, [7:47] did you have any idea what went
9 on inside Fisher Body from your uncle, or...?
10
11Garry Bernath: No, I had, I did not have a clue. Uh, the fact of it is, I, I guess, uh, was, I
12 feel fortunate. Don't even know if I woulda stayed in there, uh, had the,
13 had circumstances been different, but I hired in. Uh, there was a – first
14 supervisor was guy named, uh, Jim Beam, and, uh, he, right off the bat he
15 was one of your old crewcut, y'know, white shirt, rolled up sleeves with a
16 cigarette pack in the, oh, y'know, your vision of a, of a GM supervisor, if
17 you will. Uh, he basically told me, uh, "Hey, kid, you're lucky. I gotta
18 good job for ya. My name's Jim Beam. If you ever forget it, just
19 remember the, the whiskey." And, uh, pointed me to a, a job installin'
20 vinyl tops, uh, on Eighty-Eights, Ninety-Eights, and, uh, we also built, uh,
21 oh, Christ, the, the, the uh, Buick, uh, Toronado, I believe it was. And, uh,
22 that was the job and I stayed on that job until they did away with vinyl
23 tops. So, the point bein', is, is, had I not landed on such a good jo, I don't
24 believe I would've stayed there for the long haul.
25
26Doug Rademacher: As you say that, Garry, [9:03] did you have a plan? Where you just
27 comin' in for a reason?
28
29Garry Bernath: I had no clue. I, like I say, I was surprised I even go the job. Uh, had a
30 brother that worked over at the Olds, and, uh, y'know. I, I remember as a
31 kid, uh, he was 2 years ahead of me and I remember as a, as a junior in
32 high school, him hirin' into, he hired into Oldsmobile right out of, uh, right
33 outta high school. And I remember lookin' at his paycheck, y'know, then
34 thinkin', "Wow, you got it made," y'know, "no college education, look at
35 the kind of money you're makin." And I really, y'know, kinda thought he
36 died and went to heaven but, again, never havin' a desire to, to, uh – I used
37 to tell the members, uh, when I was a representative there, I said,
38 "Y'know, I'm not here out of a, a lifelong ambition to build Pontiac Grand
39 Ams." Of course, back then it woulda been to build Oldsmobiles. It
40 wasn't somethin' that, y'know, I, and I don't believe anybody really was. I
41 don't, I can't imagine anybody in, in high school sayin', "Boy, what I
42 wanna do for a living is get in there and build, y'know, Oldsmobiles or
43 Pontiac Grand Ams. It was just the nature of the beast.
44
45 It was a good job, uh, new. It was, y'know, there was always the phrase
46 back when I, in the '70s, uh, that, "Boy, if you get a Union job you got it

1 made." Uh, I heard that, y'know, time and time again as a kid, y'know.
2 You gotta good job if you got a Union job. So, like I say, I rolled into it,
3 landed on a great job and, and, and I'm still there today. Still hold
4 seniority over there.
5
6 Doug Rademacher: You mentioned you did, uh, vinyl tops. [10:34] What department was that
7 in?
8
9 Garry Bernath: It would have been in the trim shop.
10
11 Doug Rademacher: [10:37] And what shift did you hire on to?
12
13 Garry Bernath: Hired on to first shift. Uh, was actually on first shift probably, well, less
14 than 100 days and then of course got bumped. Back when I hired in, in
15 the '70s, you could figure it took at least, back then, to have the, the worst
16 job in the department, you were lookin' at 8 years to be on days. And, uh,
17 once I got on nights, uh, y'know, my wife was on nights and, uh, y'know, I
18 just got comfortable on nights. I actually never went to days until I got
19 elected to, uh, shop committee and then I got my taste of days other than
20 that first 100 days when I hired in.
21
22 Doug Rademacher: Now, you just said your wife was on second shift. [11:21] Where you
23 married when you hired in, or...
24
25 Garry Bernath: No, no, I...
26
27 Doug Rademacher: ...did you meet your wife...
28
29 Garry Bernath: ... actually, I knew her. Uh, we, we met up in our community. She was,
30 uh, from Ovid and I knew her and, and, uh, she hired in, I believe it was in
31 '70, yes, she hired in in '78. And, uh, y'know, one thing led to another
32 [laughter]. Twenty-six years and we're still married.
33
34 Doug Rademacher: Congratulations. [11:40] Would you tell us a little bit about any other
35 departments that you worked in while you were in the...
36
37 Garry Bernath: Yeah, I'd, uh...
38
39 Doug Rademacher: ...[inaudible 11:56].
40
41 Garry Bernath: ...that, that – funny you'd bring that up because that that brings me to the
42 idea of actually thinkin' about quittin' the place. Uh, I, uh, they had a level
43 and, it's called levelin' off. It's a term in the agreement that, if you didn't
44 have seniority and hold a department, you could choose to go out or you
45 could level off. And I, I foolishly, uh, I, I say foolishly I, 'cause I regretted
46 doin' it, but I did level off. That then took me to the paint shop. Uh, there

1 I seen probably the most horrendous job I ever did in that place. Uh, it
2 was sprayin' the underbodies. You literally – they, they put a hood on ya.
3 Oxygen goes to the back of the hood. You'd put covers, alls on. You
4 would tape your gloves to your coveralls. You would tape off your ankles
5 to your boots and you would go in this booth and spray the underbody of
6 the Oldsmobiles as they were going down the line. Uh, it was, it was god-
7 awful, uh, work conditions. Uh, in fact, you couldn't even, it was so bad,
8 you couldn't even talk to your, your, your coworker across the line. There
9 was only 2 of us in the booth; me on one side, him on the other. Uh, and
10 we, and you couldn't even have conversation because of the, the
11 conditions, uh. [laughter]
12

13 Another example of how bad it was, the supervisor would come in, open
14 the door briefly and write line time on a chalk board so you knew how
15 long you were goin'. I mean, it was just, uh, it was absolutely the worst
16 work conditions I've ever had. Uh, I, I knew I had to do somethin', uh,
17 [laughter] I went to see my doctor and, uh, y'know, told'm I was gettin'
18 excruciating headaches and, and I will admit I, I fudged that a little bit. I
19 mean, it was just, it was so boring, monotonous, rotten, stinkin' work that
20 I, I had it in my mind I was going' to get out of there by hook or by crook.
21 Uh, went to my doctor, told him I was gettin' these excruciating headaches
22 from bein' in the fumes and, uh, ha, had to get out. And, uh, he wrote me
23 a restriction. I took it on into work. Uh, they said, "Well, geez, we got
24 these jobs over," what they called, "the wet deck." At the time, an equally
25 bad job but at least I could have conversation with fellow coworkers and I
26 just hung in there on that. Uh, I used to run what was called the side
27 wheel. Uh, I, I'd run the side wheel until I could finally get the, get back
28 to putting on vinyl tops. [laughter]
29

30 Doug Rademacher: [14:28] Now, what is, exactly, a side wheel.

31
32 Garry Bernath: Uh, as the cars went through the, uh, there was a paint prep area, the sealer
33 room where they came in. Of course, the first thing was that god-awful
34 booth I talked about where they were doin' the under spray. Then, they'd
35 come out into a sealer room where they would, uh, and, and, back then,
36 you had a whole lot of women. The fact of it is, before I got moved to the
37 wet deck, I was bein' used as an absentee replacement and there, a lot of
38 the women were in the sealer room back then, uh, for whatever reason.
39 And, uh, they would seal all the cracks in the wells and everything else.
40 And then, from the sealer room, it moved into the, the wet deck, uh, or I
41 should say then it moved into the primer booth where it got primed and
42 then, when it come out of the primer booth, they, you had to wet-sand the
43 entire car. Uh, though the job I had was the worst, 'cause obviously, if you
44 stood up and you could put the, the, the big wheel that they used as a
45 sander, uh, on top of the car, that was a lot less work obviously, but to
46 stand there and hold, to hold the, uh, the wheel and do the side was, uh,

1 more work and less desirable. So that's, that, in essence, is what, what a
2 side wheel was.
3
4 Doug Rademacher: Well, since we're in the paint department, [15:41 can you share what the
5 environment was? Was there proper breathing? Was there, I know they'd
6 switched over the years to different types of, of ways to draw those
7 fumes...
8
9 Garry Bernath: Yeah.
10
11 Doug Rademacher: ...and stuff. Can you...
12
13 Garry Bernath: Well, back then...
14
15 Doug Rademacher: ... [inaudible 15:53]
16
17 Garry Bernath: ...uh, and I'm referrin' to back in the '70s, 'cause I've seen it on both sides.
18 But back when I was workin' in it, it wasn't highly automated like paint
19 shops are today. I mean, you can, I'm told and I've seen, due to my
20 experiences, I've seen pain shops that, y'know, you could roll a bowling
21 ball down it and not hit anybody. They're, they, they've highly automated
22 the pain shops. Back then, they were usin' people with sealer wands,
23 using people sprayin' underneath the bodies, using people to spray the car,
24 uh, y'know, on and on. Uh, they don't, matter of fact, I don't, no – they
25 don't even wet-sand cars anymore. It's just touch-up work if they see a
26 defect or somethin' like that. Back then, they, they actually literally wet-
27 sanded the entire body of the car. Uh, I, y'know, the first thing that comes
28 to mind was the place. It just stunk because you had, had them fumes you
29 had to deal with, and, uh, that was, I guess, my first reaction to it, is,
30 y'know, "Pee-U! Y'know, it just stunk. [snapping]
31
32 Doug Rademacher: Marilyn Coulter.
33
34 Marilyn Coulter: Uh, Garry, in working in the paint department, [16:59] was it summertime
35 or wintertime or did that make a difference on the fumes and the, did the
36 heat make a difference at all workin' out there?
37
38 Garry Bernath: Yeah, the, the heat obviously, because of all the ovens. Back then, they
39 had the paint ovens that baked the paint and everything else. Uh, uh, it
40 was worse, I mean, almo, it was terrible in the summertime and, and the
41 smell seemed to get exasperated in the summer. I mean, they just in,
42 intensified in, in the summertime. I, I, I was happy wh, when, 'cause I was
43 in there during the summertime when I leveled off and I was happy, uh, I
44 shouldn't say happy, but it, it didn't bother me much going to the wet deck
45 because that was the coolest spot in the paint shop. It, y'know, you'd have
46 a little, little horseplay and spray each other with paint and, or with,

1 excuse me, with, uh, water so – but no, it was, it was much worse up there
2 in the summertime than in the winter.
3

4Marilyn Coulter: Well, you bring forth a couple questions. The other one I wanted to ask,
5 [17:52] when you talk about the environment and the heat and all this
6 apparatus that you had to put on, how did that work for your breaks and
7 your lunches and how did the fumes affect you eatin', all that stuff?
8

9Garry Bernath: Uh, you just stepped out of the booth and, of course, you'd see, y'know,
10 you'd see the guy strollin' around because he had everything. You, you'd
11 un-tape your gloves and eat your sandwich 'cause you couldn't, you didn't
12 have enough time, with the break times allowed, to get out of your –
13 matter of fact, even at lunch I didn't, didn't disrobe, uh, to get outta that
14 stuff. You just, you just had it on and took your gloves off and your hood
15 off and, like I say, back then they just pumped oxygen to you to help you
16 breath in there, so it was, it was miserable.
17

18Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. So Garry, you're first hired in. You heard about the
19 place from your uncle. You end up in the trim department. [18:45] Tell
20 me about the people. Your first, say your first day, your first week, what
21 didja think of building automobiles? And, uh, share'...
22

23Garry Bernath: Well...

24

25Doug Rademacher: ...share somethin' abou, share a little of that.
26

27Garry Bernath: Back then, and it, it probably had a lot to do with, again, y'know, certain
28 things just kinda direct ya in life and, back then, I was, I was, uh, I guess
29 amazed, y'know. I spoke my little brief experience at Eugene Welding
30 with the union. Uh, when I hired in there, uh, as good as that job was and
31 I'm a young man thinkin', "Man, I just died and went to heaven," 'cause ,
32 y'know, installing vinyl tops, you, not every car was a vinyl top. Uh, we
33 had, back then, I think 6, 5 or 6 teams of 4 people to a team to install the
34 vinyl top. Uh, it, it was a great job I thought. Uh, those, the senior
35 members didn't think so and was, had committee calls in to their, to their
36 committeemen. Jim Shock was the guy's name I remember, a big ole guy.
37 Uh, he came up and, uh, y'know – I thought, as a new hire, I would join
38 my fellow brothers [laughter] in complaining about the job and those guys
39 knew enough about it and they took care enough of, of the younger
40 workers then that and, I hope they still do now, I don't know.
41

42 But they, they said, "Hey, listen, the last thing we need is a new hire
43 puttin' in a committee call." Because the company will say, "Hey, look!
44 Even he's got a call in and he don't know what the hell he's doin'. He's just
45 been here, y'know, X amount of, 90 days or 30 days," whatever the hell it
46 was. So, uh, they, they just basically said, "No, Garry, you're not puttin' a

1 call in. You, we'll take care of this." And, and, and that, y'know, I mean,
2 it was, it was a good feeling knowing that these guys had it figured out
3 and, and I was lookin' forward to, y'know, makin' the job even, even
4 better. And, uh, they won that grievance and, uh, won the 78 and
5 [laughter] it ended up happening to where they had people that sprayed the
6 vinyl tops, uh, they settled it that, rather than the team goin' over and
7 gettin' the vinyl tops, the people that were sprayin' the vinyl tops
8 delivered'm to the car and put'm on the car and then we just stepped up to
9 the car. That was the resolve of, of, of the 78. So, uh, y'know, it, it was, it
10 was, I, I tell you, the guys, everybody I worked with looked out after ya.
11
12 I mean, it was a true brotherhood, if you will. Uh, there wasn't any, at that
13 time, there wasn't, uh, any women on the day shift that did vinyl tops, but
14 there was on night shift and, uh, it was, y'know, I, it left a good feeling.
15 And the people, I've, I've said it time, the people were the greatest part of
16 the job. I mean, they made it, they made the boring, monotonous work
17 bearable. Uh, without the people, uh, I don't think I woulda hung out.
18 [laughter]
19
20 Doug Rademacher: Now, you said the word "78." [21:41] Now, can you share, obviously
21 you'd started out in the '70s when you hired in, but what is a 78 that you're
22 referring to?
23
24 Garry Bernath: Oh, a, a 78, paragraph 78 of the, uh, national agreement is a work
25 standards grievance that, uh, y'know, each member over there would be
26 able to say, to call their committeeman and, and complain about havin' too
27 much work and it was called the 78. So, after paragraph 78, so it was, it
28 was a work standard grievance that, uh, any member could raise his hand
29 and say, "Hey, I think I got too much work, boss," and get the Union
30 involved and, and take it from there.
31
32 Doug Rademacher: You talked a little bit about the people bein' the greatest part of goin' to
33 work. [22:23] Can you tell us, was there any particular initiations for a
34 guy like you or for the new, the new blood?
35
36 Garry Bernath: No, I, I, uh, you wouldn't have known, I mean, if there was, uh, you know.
37 No, I wasn't treated any different than anybody else. Uh, uh, when Friday
38 rolled along, I got invited out. I, I guess I knew I belonged with the ole
39 boys. When Friday afternoon rolled along, they always, uh, went out to
40 lunch and had a, had a beer or two and I, it just felt good. Here I am, uh,
41 y'know, 20 years old and these older guys said, "Hey, come on, kid. Let's
42 go have a beer." And, uh, I guess I knew I, I fit in at that point, but sure,
43 surely goin' out on a Friday afternoon and, and havin' a beer with the guys.
44 No, I, they, they treated me just as good a, as anybody, as one of their
45 own's that been there forever. E, like I say, even to the point with the
46 story I just shared, that they were lookin' out for me and in turn, lookin'

1 out for themselves, uh, because they were real clear to point out that, "We
2 don't need no new hire complainin' about the work load."
3
4 Doug Rademacher: Can you tell me [23:30], do you remember a person in particular that
5 taught you your job or that showed you the ropes?
6
7 Garry Bernath: Yeah, uh, Ray Fish, Don Rathburn, uh, geez, [chuckle] the years have
8 slipped. Uh, yeah, there was, there was a host of'm. Uh, when I got to
9 nights, because I was on nights for so much longer, I, I bonded with those
10 guys more than I did the brief time I was on days, but those guys that were
11 on days, uh, as I, uh, I guess rose in the ranks of the local union, uh,
12 always stayed in touch with'm, considered'm good friends and, and, and
13 still bump into'm, uh, at times, at, at farm auctions and different events
14 that, that, uh, I go to.
15
16 Doug Rademacher: You're sharing that, that continuation of friends and stuff that you've
17 made. [24:21] Didja hire in with a group of people or where you hired in
18 individually?
19
20 Garry Bernath: Well, actually, the day I hired in there was 7 of us hired that day and it
21 was, y'know, uh, you, you almost felt like you were at a cattle auction,
22 y'know, uh, uh. I, I spoke of Jim Beam. He, I remember him walkin' in.
23 They walked me out. Uh, then he was, he was called the general, uh,
24 supervisor. I remember settin' in the general supervisor's office and, uh,
25 eh, Jim Beam walked in, "You, you, come with me." And that was it.
26 So...
27
28 Doug Rademacher: And you...
29
30 Garry Bernath: ...yeah.
31
32 Doug Rademacher: ...and you followed like a sheep.
33
34 Garry Bernath: Yeah. I followed'm on, on out to the vinyl top area.
35
36 Doug Rademacher: Okay. Um, let's, uh, since you did spend [25:07] how many years in the
37 body plant?
38
39 Garry Bernath: Uh, well, I just went on, uh, international staff 7 years ago, so I, I, from '76
40 to '99, so 23 years, I guess.
41
42 Doug Rademacher: [25:23] Did it ever amaze you, the fact that certain people hired into the
43 plant, went to their job, got their paycheck, and never changed jobs? Did
44 you...
45
46 Garry Bernath: Oh, yeah.

1

2Doug Rademacher: ...ever think about those people?

3

4Garry Bernath:

5 Yeah. My uncle Joe! Uh, even today, as I, I argue with corporations
6 across the country, uh, I use my uncle Joe's story, uh, because he,
7 [chuckle] uh, just amazed me. As I was on my cupcake job with no
8 seniority, I'd walk up and see my uncle Joe who, at the time, had 28 years'
9 seniority when I hired in and, uh, he was boltin' in seatbelts. And I'm
10 thinkin', "My God!" Y'know, I mean, just a miserable job to where he had
11 to turn into the car and, y'know, then you had a big, heavy ole gun with a
12 rod and it just goin' "rrr-rrr-rr" 'til you locked the seatbelt bolt in, and,
13 y'know, that'd be full of filler uh, or, uh, uh, not filler but sealer and stuff
14 like that. And I thought to myself, y'know, "Uncle Joe, ya got 28 years."
15 I'm settin' down there workin' on every 6th job when this vinyl top comes
16 along, which would relate to probably about every 12th job, and he's in
17 there every, every car boltin' in seatbelts and it just amazed me, you know.
18 And I talked to him and, y'know, at, at times, he was the kinda worker that
19 just came to work and kept his mouth shut and, uh, the supervisor would
20 reward him.

20

21 There was a switching job where cars got marshalled. Uh, my, my uncle
22 Joe never put an app in for the, or a transfer in for the job or anything else
23 but, every once in a while, the supervisor would kinda reward him and
24 he'd go up in control, which was just pushin' buttons as these cars got
25 marshalled through and then sent on over to the Oldsmobile. And,
26 y'know, it, to him, that was his reward and, y'know, uh, ya, and it's, it's
27 funny because, y'know, as I grew up in the business, I, I always wondered
28 why no one ever complained that my uncle Joe got that job on occasion,
29 uh, y'know, because as I come through, I understood, y'know, absentee
30 replacement workers and everything else. But back then, it was, well, it,
31 it, it appeared to every, uh, worker in the area, well, of, I heard it that Joe
32 never complains and that's just what they did back then. Uh, nobody
33 raised a stink about it. But he retired when, the day he retired he was
34 boltin' in seatbelts and, and, if you see the guy today [laughter] you, you,
35 he walks, y'know, with a, with one shoulder hanging down and, and I
36 know why he walks the way he does. It was, it was [chuckle] years of
37 boltin' in seatbelts and turnin' that, that, today, he, y'know, I know why he
38 walks that way but the average Joe wouldn't. So, yeah, I, it, it always
39 amazed me.

40

41 And, and y'know, and, not only my uncle Joe. There's a whole host of
42 people that was, would do jobs that, uh, would've caused me to leave the
43 place. I, I woulda quit the place. I [chuckle] I'm thinkin', "How can you
44 do this day in and day out, day in and day out?" But, uh, I guess ya just
45 get in the groove, you know? And, and havin' said that, I certainly wasn't
46 blessed to have the best job my whole career. Uh, there were days that I

1 struggled with, uh, y'know, doin' that and, y'know, I, I guess I self-
2 medicated, y'know. I mean, I, I got through it.
3
4 Doug Rademacher: Right.
5
6 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
7
8 Doug Rademacher: Yeah, you had said you did the job down in the, uh, in the paint
9 department where you were...
10
11 Garry Bernath: Yeah.
12
13 Doug Rademacher: ...taped in and so you had your days of those jobs and you just kinda look
14 back as you, uh, were able to get back to your other job that somebody did
15 that every day.
16
17 Garry Bernath: Oh, yeah. Well, and I always thought, y'know, the transfer process in, in
18 my earlier days as a committeeman in there, I would always, y'know – a
19 lot of people would call and complain about, y'know, and I, I would
20 always tell people, "Hey, this thing works," y'know, "if you, you need help
21 puttin' in the transfer, I'll help you." But, y'know, that was really the light
22 at the end of the tunnel for people that said, "Hey, I want off this job.
23 And, uh, y'know, and, and it did work.
24
25 Doug Rademacher: Did you, uh, you worked there during a number of name changes. It went
26 from Fisher Body to the BLC, Buick-Old-Cadillac group. We closed
27 down in the end of this last year as Lansing Car Assembly. [29:42] What's
28 your, uh, what's the building to you?
29
30 Garry Bernath: Uh, it, it's always been Fisher Body, uh, y'know. I started talkin', y'know,
31 I hired in to Fisher Body. It'll always be Fisher Body. I used to, uh, I
32 wrote a lot when I was in elected positions and, and I would let the
33 membership know, y'know, while some, uh, ex, executive might, uh, be in
34 the sign business and they're enriching him, this place will always be
35 Fisher Body. And, and, and as the place changed names and as that kinda
36 stuff happened, I believe, uh, people started losin' identity with – I mean,
37 to me there was always a pride that I worked at Fisher Body and, and,
38 y'know, I could talk for hours on, on why that was. And it was based on,
39 probably my involvement with the Union and knowin' what working
40 conditions and what things were like across at the Olds. I mean, there was
41 a pride in Fisher Body. Uh, uh, I, I was always, I, and, and still believe it
42 to this day, that the Union was stronger at Fisher Body than it was
43 anywhere else in town. Uh, we were the first, y'know, UAW local in town
44 and there was just a level of pride with Fisher Body. And, and, y'know, I
45 always, uh, I, I, I st, I carry that to this day.
46

1 And y' know, I, I'm an international rep today and you'd be surprised the
2 number of offices I step into that have Fisher Body memorabilia in'm and
3 that just tells me there's a whole lotta people that feel the same way I did
4 about the pride of Fisher Body to, to, to they're takin' it to their new offices
5 down at Solidarity House and havin' Fisher Body memorabilia in'm. So, I,
6 it, it was just a pride I think that I certainly had and, and y'know, and it
7 wasn't just because, y'know, I – I mentioned my uncle Joe. I had another
8 uncle, my Uncle Bob, uh, worked in the place and retired out of the place
9 and, uh, he worked in the body shop. And, yeah, I mean, I don't know,
10 there was just a pride in Fisher Body that I think they've, we've lost that
11 identity and, and that's too bad.
12

13Doug Rademacher: Marilyn Coulter.
14

15Marilyn Coulter: Garry, I'd like to take you back to night shift in the trim department. I
16 know you said you had a lot of friends that still extended and, y'know, a
17 lot of times we call each other, like, union brother and sister, so it's...
18

19Garry Bernath: Mm-hm.
20

21Marilyn Coulter: ...kinda like family. And you bein' a young man and a young family man
22 and working on nights, [32:05] how did young people make it through
23 workin' night shift? Can you take us through what it was like workin' in
24 the plant, being young?
25

26Garry Bernath: Uh, it was, uh, y'know, earlier in my career and I'm talkin' the '70s, early
27 '80s, y'know, I, I – I didn't start a family until I was, uh, uh, I, actually, I
28 had, I was married, I guess, 8 or 9 years before we started a family. So, I
29 didn't, I didn't have any struggles that, that they did the, not bein' able to
30 be a family, events, and everything else. Uh, but I'd hear it, and, and the
31 beauty of it was, back then, uh, th, there wasn't th, the competition or the
32 competitiveness, uh, in foreign car builders that there is today. Back then,
33 it was [chuckle], it was easy enough if I didn't want to, to work that day, I,
34 I mean, there were literally times I would get into work an hour early to
35 run into the, into the supervisor's – back then, they had desks, they didn't
36 have offices or anything. They had desks right out in the area and there
37 was a sheet of paper that, if you wanted the day off and you were the first
38 one to put your name on that list, there was a good chance you'd get the
39 day off. And, uh, y'know, they were much more understanding, y'know,
40 there were, y'know, uh, back then and I, I felt it was going to move to
41 where we'd have a day off, uh, huh, a day off a month.
42

43 We had these things called PPH days, which stands for Paid Personal
44 Holidays and it was almost, I, hell, it was better than Christmas. The, I, I
45 remember in the shop the day they passed out, the supervisors – you were
46 more excited about getting your PPH slip than you were your paycheck

1 that night because you then knew what days you were gonna have off, uh,
2 the next year. And it was, y'know, it was neat things we had at, at that
3 time. Uh, unfortunately, they're gone now, like I say, due to, due to how
4 competitive the industry's gotten. Uh, but, y'know, most, be, because of
5 the extra manpower, people were able to get the night off and, and,
6 y'know, it wasn't shuttin' down production but, y'know, we'd have an area
7 of, of, of, say, 30 to 35 people in the supervisor's area and it was nothin' to
8 have 5 or 6, uh, y'know, they call'm everything from extra-board, utility,
9 absentee replacement over the years. Back then, I think they were called
10 extra-board. There was nothin' to have 5 or 6 extra-board people in a
11 supervisor's area for absentee replacement, vacation replacement,
12 whatever the case may be. So, y'know, yeah, I guess people were able to
13 get out then, uh, unlike, uh, what I've seen as my career has went on.
14 They, you certainly, I, I doubt like hell if there's a sign-up sheet at a
15 supervisor's desk anymore to get the day off, uh, so...

16
17 Marilyn Coulter: [34:51] What about on those nights when you couldn't get out but you
18 were on a team that worked every 6th job? Did you read, listen to music,
19 play cards? What didja do?
20

21 Garry Bernath: Oh, yeah. Uh, we, uh, we actually, uh, we enjoyed gamblin'. Uh, we did
22 quite a bit of gamblin' back in the vinyl top area, y'know. And there, there
23 was a lot of neat things, uh, yeah. [Andy Graham 35:09], Michelle
24 Penfield, uh, [chuckle] we did a lot of things to, to break the, uh, the
25 monotony, and, and, y'know, I mean, uh, [chuckle] the cars would come
26 through an oven and I remember Michelle and Andy, it wa, we would
27 cook in this oven as the cars come through. We had, we made little metal
28 shelves and, and every time, y'know, some quality thing would pop up,
29 why, they would say, "Oh, it's them, it's the damn cookin' back in the
30 ovens." Well, it only came through the oven there to, y'know, heat up the
31 car so the glue would adhere to the top. Back in further, where they came
32 through the paint ovens, I mean, come Christmas time and Thanksgiving
33 time, we were bakin' hams and we were, we were cookin' turkeys back in
34 those, them were the paint ovens. And the guys that worked there and the,
35 and the ladies that worked there, they, I mean, it was, uh, it was, it was
36 like a [chuckle] a whole different recipe that they knew how long it had to
37 be in them ovens, where the hot spots were in the ovens.
38

39 Uh, we used to, I, we'd go out at lunchtime and buy a bunch of polish
40 sausage and onions and cut'm up and put'm in that oven before the, as they
41 came out of, out of the paint shop and, and we were chowin' down. Like I
42 say, we gambled a lot. Uh, we used ta, during our, our, when we didn't
43 have a job goin' on, and everybody helped everybody out, if they seen you
44 were on the street gamblin', why, somebody else would step up on the job
45 and you'd catch'm later, but we used to pitch nickels against the wall and
46 there might be 5 or 6 of us pitchin' these nickels against the wall and, uh,

1 of course, whoever had the nickel closest to the wall scraped up the
2 money. And that elevated to quarters an, and everything else. So, it was,
3 y'know, we just did things ta, like I say, uh, forget, y'know. And I, I can't
4 emphasize, even today, y'know, I mean, they're, while, y'know, the auto
5 workers get beat up that they make too much. I mean, y'know, it, I, I
6 challenge people to stand on that assembly line and do that, not for a day,
7 but do it for weeks and months, and, and, y'know, the boring, monotonous
8 work that is involved in assembly line work – you gotta find some relief.
9
10 Uh, I fought it back when they were sayin', y'know, the silly stuff and, and
11 thank God I never did, uh, I never did witness it. Uh, again today, because
12 of my job, I see it in factories where newspapers are banned, magazines
13 are banned and, and even when I had the worst jobs, y'know, because I
14 wasn't always on vinyl. I had bad jobs at trim shop. Uh, even when I was
15 on them, you had the, the little bit of a reprieve by lert, goin' to a book or
16 to a paper and bein' able to only read a, a, maybe a paragraph but you'd be
17 able to catch up and, and, at least break the mindset of, of, y'know, the
18 boring and monotonous work. So...
19
20 Doug Rademacher: Earl Nicholson.
21
22 Earl Nicholson, Sr.: Um, Garry, as a new hire and, um, as you progressed, uh, over your years,
23 uh, in the factory, [38:10] what, uh, what was your relationship with
24 skilled trades and how did you interact with'm?
25
26 Garry Bernath: [laughter] Well, I could, I, my, uh, I guess [chuckle] uh, my first
27 experience with trades was when I got elected full-time district
28 committeeman in the trim shop, and, uh, they re-districted, which, uh, the
29 shop committee would, would name what a district was gonna look like,
30 so you had roughly 250 people that you would represent as a district
31 committeeman. My first experience with'm was, when they re-districted,
32 there was a mindset then to try to get everybody a little bit of overtime that
33 was in a union, a full-time union job. Well, in order to accommodate that
34 desire, uh, they give us, the, uh, [chuckle] the waste water treatment plant
35 and the power house and that was my first experience. I'm a production
36 worker. I go out and I take a committee call from, uh, a person in the
37 power house and they start spillin' out all this doublin' back and that they
38 were losin' money and on and on and on they went and it, it had nothin' to
39 do with the workload. I, I, I certainly witnessed – it, it seemed like they
40 had a good job. Uh, I used to, one of our past presidents, Al Presley, or
41 Alvin Presley, why, he, uh, he changed lightbulbs in the place and I
42 always used to hoot on him.
43
44 Uh, I wasn't shy when I was on the assembly line of, of, uh, abuse'n
45 clipboard jobs or whatever the case may be [chuckle]. Uh, I was probably
46 more radical and as these people went by, I would holler out, "Hey, get a

1 job," y'know. Because I knew I was, uh, uh, I affectionally call it chasin'
2 the chain. I knew I was, I was chained to that [chuckle] line and I wasn't
3 goin' nowhere but I'm watchin' these people, Al was one, y'know. I'm
4 thinkin', "What do you do?" "Well, I change lightbulbs." And I thought,
5 "My God! What a great job! I'm bustin' my ass on this assembly line and
6 you're ridin' around in a cart, y'know, maybe changin' a lightbulb a day, I
7 don't know." [chuckle] It didn't look like he changed very many to me.
8 And, and when I got out and I represented them workers in the power
9 house, I was kinda half-assed insulted that, that they were s, so damned
10 worried about their paychecks and, and the power house, I mean, it almost
11 looked like you were steppin' in a cafeteria back then. They had great
12 work environment, uh, and I guess, I, I guess maybe I was envious but I, I
13 never really had the desire to go into trades. I mean, there was a program.

14
15 Today, lookin' back, I probably regret it because, y'know, as you see
16 what's happen, the, the structural change goin' on in the industry, uh, to, to
17 have a trade would, is invaluable versus, well, geez, I, I worked in a
18 factory for 20 years as an assembly line worker and, and, if the world falls
19 to pieces, what do they have? Where the trades people actually had a
20 trade where they could go out and do it but, probably, I, I guess in a
21 nutshell or, uh, just, maybe jealousy, maybe pissed off. But they, they
22 certainly didn't seem like they, they, they carried their, their weight and,
23 I'm not, y'know, not all of'm. But, uh, another example as a
24 committeeman, uh, I used to have, uh, members in the trim shop complain
25 that the fan up on the roof, uh, would be off every time they came in,
26 obviously in the summertime and, uh, I'd get committee call every,
27 y'know, the beginnin' of the shift, people are complainin' about the, the fan
28 not bein' turned on. Well, you had to go up into a, uh, uh, I guess a power
29 house or whatever the hell it was up on the roof to turn that fan on. And,
30 and the electrician finally, after I raised so much hell, went to the skilled
31 trades zone at the time and raised hell about this, y'know, turnin' this fan
32 on.

33
34 The tradesman came to me and said, "Hey, listen. Why don't you have
35 your guys go up and, and turn the fan on." Well, that was easy enough. I
36 went to, uh, to the repairman at the time that was in the supervisor's area
37 and the repairman was more than willin' to go up there because he didn't,
38 obviously, he didn't want to relieve the people on the line as they were
39 bitchin' to me about the fan not bein' on because I would, obviously, get
40 every committee call and, so he said, "Hell yeah, I'll go up there and turn
41 that thing on. It beats the hell out of, y'know, relievin' all these people for
42 committee calls. And it wasn't until they started cuttin' back on
43 electricians that the same zone committeeman...

44
45 [chuckle]
46

Marilyn Coulter:

1 Garry Bernath: ...came to me and the same electrician that, at that time, couldn't be
2 bothered with goin' up there and turnin' that fan on, said, "Hey, bull shit!
3 That's my job. They're, production's doin' my job and we need to change
4 this thing around." And, and again, that mighta been one of the mindsets
5 that, y'know, "Well, what are we, chopped liver here on production
6 workers?". And, uh, so, I don't know, half of it, like I say, was jealousy,
7 half of it was I was pissed off 'cause they thought they were some sort of
8 prima donna. Uh, and over my years, y'know, the mindset, I used to battle
9 with these guys that the mindset was – I, I had one particular, uh, the
10 mindset was that, "Hey, if I didn't, don't put my shoes on today, General
11 Motors makes money." Uh, that, y'know, they thought as long as they
12 were settin' on their butt doin' nothin' that it was okay and meanwhile,
13 production – I mean, obviously, you can tell I was a production worker,
14 still think like a production worker, always will, but it just always pissed
15 me off, and again, whether it was anger or whether it was jealousy I
16 couldn't quite tell ya, Earl. [laughter].
17

18 Earl Nicholson, Sr.: So, so now, so now that we, we've gone through that, I'll have to ask you
19 the question [43:48] has skilled trades ever done a government job for
20 you?
21

22 Garry Bernath: Uh, in the plant, when I was in the plant, no. Since leavin' to go with the
23 international, yeah, I've, uh, I've had some beautiful, uh, I, I've had some,
24 I've got some beautiful things. I got this clock that the skilled trades
25 workers in Anderson, Indiana, made me that, that, after I got done
26 negotiatin' their national agreement, that they gave me, that, uh, it is just
27 beautiful. It's all outta stainless steel. It's got, uh, "UAW International
28 Rep - Garry Bernath" on the face of it, all, y'know, however they cut it
29 into it, probably with lasers or somthin', but yeah, I've, since I've been on
30 the job as an international rep, I've had several government jobs and, and
31 they, there were always tokens of appreciation but, in the plant, no. No.
32

33 Doug Rademacher: Marilyn Coulter.

34

35 Garry Bernath: And that was probably 'cause they never asked for one.

36

37 Marilyn Coulter: Um, Garry, what I wanted to ask you was, that, now since we talked a lot
38 about your union activity and you on the line and you were vocal about
39 certain things, what I wanna know is a couple things. Number 1, a two-
40 part question. [44:58] Number 1: What made a good supervisor for you
41 and what made a bad supervisor? But then, the other thing about it was
42 what got you to sayin', "I wanna be union. I wanna get active in the Union
43 and how that happened. Did you...
44

45 Garry Bernath: Yeah.
46

1Marilyn Coulter: ...and your friends do it? Take us on that journey a little bit.

2

3Garry Bernath: Yeah. Uh, I guess to the, to the tune of what makes a good and a bad
4 supervisor and it ties into why I got involved [chuckle] with the Union, uh,
5 a, a good supervisor always stood up for his employees and, and I've seen,
6 I've, I've seen that through, through my entire, I see it today. Uh, they
7 always would, would stand up and, and, and take care of their, their, their
8 employees. Uh, whether it be that night off I talked about or whether it be,
9 y'know, "No, I'm not gonna discipline him. He's a good worker. He
10 comes in every day. Just because he went out and maybe had one too
11 many beers at lunch or whatever." That they would always, y'know, take
12 the employees position and wouldn't, wouldn't kowtow to the, to the
13 general supervisor.

14

15 And, actually, what got me involved in, in the Union – there used to, there
16 was 2 systems, uh, back in the old days. Uh, one system, the A system,
17 built, uh, Cutlasses and the B system built the Eighty-Eights and Ninety-
18 Eights and these, these, these Toronados and, uh, it seemed, well, it didn't
19 seem, it, it was a plain, simple fact that the worst supervision was on the A
20 system and, uh, because of, y'know, seniority flow rights and everything
21 else, whenever my job, because it was a good job, uh, be it, y'know, I
22 always refer to my installing vinyl tops, but it went beyond that. I, I
23 moved to other jobs because then I got more seniority and could, could get
24 the, get the transfer. Uh, whenever I went to the A system, uh, supervisors
25 such as [Orville Gray 46:47] and John, uh, God, what was John's – a real
26 asshole [chuckle]...

27

28Earl Nicholson, Sr.: Powers?

29

30Garry Bernath: John Powers. I mean, it, it just seemed like the mindset down on the A
31 system was, was, was, uh, 180 of where I was. And the B system
32 supervisors kinda let things, y'know, they, uh, they stood up for the
33 employees. It didn't seem like they were nitpickin', uh, bein' a major pain
34 in the ass but, whenever I went down to the A system, they were. And I
35 only ran for union positions when I was down on the A system. Uh, I first
36 started out, uh, [Joe Serna 47:20] was, uh – matter of fact, Marilyn, you
37 were in that area. Uh, I always said I got elected by my, uh, my check
38 pool and I was always pissed because my check pool would always run
39 about 21 people and when I first got elected, I only got 13 votes and I was
40 pissed at my check pool people because I said, "You guys couldn't even
41 get over and vote!"

42

43 Uh, but, but that's when I got involved with the union, was when I was
44 down in the A system. And there was a time that, when recall rights
45 permitted me to go back to the B system, my work environment was wach,
46 much more pleasant up there that I, I actually resigned my union position

1 because of the transfer back to the B system. And, uh, then I'd plop down
2 to the A system again, uh, a union opportunity arose [chuckle], I put my
3 name on the hat again because I, it, it, for me, it, it leveled the playing
4 field with, with the likes of a John Powers and, uh, and an Orville Gray
5 and stuff that I could, I could take'm on, on equal footing and, and make
6 their life as miserable as they made mine and the members at the time, you
7 know? I mean, I, I wasn't, uh, I wasn't that well thought of by
8 management people when I was in the union position. So, so that's what
9 got me involved, is, whenever I went to the A system, I hated the way they
10 operated and I'd run for a union position. And, and, like I say, to get on
11 that equal footing and make their life as miserable as they made mine.
12

13Marilyn Coulter: You also had the [snapping] opportunity to run up the Union ladder.
14

15Garry Bernath: Yeah.
16

17Marilyn Coulter: [48:46] Can you go through that for us a little bit, all the different
18 positions...
19

20Garry Bernath: Yeah.
21

22Marilyn Coulter: ...you held?
23

24Garry Bernath: Yeah. Actually, I was fortunate, uh, and, and bein' an old politician, uh,
25 my flyers would read as such, uh, that I would say I was elected, elected to
26 as, as a lot of people would say on their union flyers that they served but I
27 was fortunate that I, I got elected to more terms than I actually served.
28 [chuckle] So, on my, on my union flyers I would say, y'know, I was
29 elected to, and I was elected to, 3 times, alternate committeeman and I was
30 elected 3 times district committeeman. Never, I did serve 2 full terms as
31 uh, as a district and then I, I, when we had mid-term elections and, and
32 that's somethin' unique about our local union that, that I may touch on later
33 but the, the shop committee was elected separate from the district
34 committee. And while some on the shop committee, when they'd get
35 there, they don't like that because they thought all the districts had a free
36 shot at their job and, and I, I still would argue today and I, I hope it's still
37 that way today that that really brings on the strongest and best candidates
38 for a position and, y'know, we should have a system set to where, uh, it, it
39 favors the incumbent, y'know. But, but enough on that. [chuckle]
40

41 Uh, I, I, I did 3 terms alternate committeeman, 3 terms district
42 committeeman, and then the, the end term there, uh, the shop committee
43 came up, uh, good friends, encouraged me to, uh, to run and I had no
44 desire. The fact of it is, I was, I was gonna run for, what the hell was it,
45 some cheesy job, I don't know, it was, I don't know. It was, it was one
46 maybe guide or somethin'. I don't, it wasn't [chuckle] y'know, it wasn't

1 nothin'. Nothin' that I was actually gonna have an opportunity to further
2 the cause, if you will, of that membership and their plight that they're goin'
3 through every day. It was some, some standing committee job, and, uh,
4 not that they don't advance causes, they certainly do, but it certainly isn't at
5 the level of a bargainer. I mean, the, that's where the rubber meets the
6 road. And, uh, so then, they come to me and they said, "Hey, Garry,
7 screw that," y'know, "what are you gonna do for us there? You need to
8 run for shop committee." Good friends, actually Mike Roach and [Joe
9 Lauer 50:58], were the ones that, that were my strongest, uh, advocates.
10 They encouraged me to run for shop committee.

11
12 And back then, the old guard, uh, y'know, they certainly didn't want to see
13 anybody knockin' on their door. Uh, y'know, the Curly Jones's, the [Ron
14 Allman's 51:16], uh, [Terry Wards 51:18]. I could go on and on with the
15 list of people that, Ron Perry, for that sake, y'know, and a lotta people.
16 Hell.

17
18 Earl Nicholson, Sr.: Yeah.

19
20 Garry Bernath: And a lotta people didn't wanna see any young upstart get into that
21 position and, uh, I was, I ma, I guess I was, I was blessed at that point that
22 I ran, that enough people that I represented at the district level had moved
23 to day shift and they knew, uh, or they at least appreciated what I was able
24 to do for'm when I was their district and, uh, I got their vote and I got
25 elected shop committee. I did 1 term of shop committee, uh, probably my,
26 my proudest moment was, was, was walkin' that membership out on a
27 strike. Uh, that's another stor, story but, ah, we walked that membership
28 out. I was a member of the shop committee when that happened and, and
29 I was, I was proud about that. I articulated my feelings very clearly to the
30 membership, much to the, uh, chagrin of, of again, my fellow shop
31 committee members who thought I ought not be doin' that and, uh,
32 y'know, life went on. Uh, then in '93, uh, I was blessed by the
33 membership to get elected president, which I did for 2 terms, uh, until I
34 got, uh, asked from, uh, vi, or at the time, uh, regional director Cal
35 Rapson, uh, was a big influence, uh, to get me a job. The offer came from
36 Dick Schumacher to go on staff. So that was it, 3 years as a, an alternate,
37 3 years as a district, elected to, 3 years [chuckle] as an alternate, 3 years as
38 a district, 1 term as, uh, shop committee, and then 2 terms as president.

39
40 Marilyn Coulter: Under your time as president of Local 602, [53:04] what would you say
41 might be a couple of things that you were most proud of as being able to
42 implement for your...

43
44 Garry Bernath: Uh, I think probably, if I had to zero back in on one thing, uh, that I knew
45 I had direct impact in, was the fixin' up of, of, I call it the ole girl, the, the
46 union hall over there. Uh, y'know, right away, uh, which – and it was

1 interesting right away, uh, I thought the place needed some sprucin' up
2 and, y'know, I used to call it the door to nowhere. It's still there but I said,
3 "Well, we could fix that. We'll plant a bush that, that'll cover up that door
4 and, an, when I planted it, obviously, it didn't. But I look over there now
5 and that door is covered up but, y'know, I mean, I, I didn't mind. I figured
6 the membership was, was payin' me good money and I didn't mind pickin'
7 up a sledge hammer. I'd wear blue jeans and a t-shirt into work and I w,
8 y'know, I remember with David Wayne, uh, he, he wasn't too excited
9 about swingin' a, uh, sledge hammer to bust open a, [chuckle] to bust out
10 the sidewalk that lead to nowhere and, uh, I was more than happy to go
11 out there and swing that sledge hammer and, and, y'know, actually
12 contribute, uh, both by the ideas and physically to fixin' up the union hall.
13
14 And, and I was blessed, y'know, with, uh, uh, was able to articulate what,
15 what our, what my thoughts were to the, to the E board and they were on
16 board with it. I mean, everybody understood that, yeah, that place needed
17 fixin' up, uh, and we, we, we redid the, we did the whole hall from the top
18 to bottom. Uh, put in new offices for the chairman, put in a new shop
19 committee room downstairs. I mean, we did, I, I, I guess, for my brief
20 time there, that was the, the major accomplishment. I mean, there was a
21 whole lot of other little things that, that I had an opportunity to influence
22 and, and make happen but that was probably, the most visible thing that I
23 can walk, step back and say, "Well, I had a, I had a piece of that."
24
25 Marilyn Coulter: You, you also, being a zone, and I know you said that you walked'm out
26 on strike...
27
28 Garry Bernath: [chuckle]
29
30 Marilyn Coulter: ...so that's one of the things you were proud about, but [55:18] can you
31 tell us about some things at zone you did? And then tell us a little bit
32 about the strike. Why'd you go out and how long were out? Things like
33 that, please.
34
35 Garry Bernath: Yeah, uh, the, there's a lotta things with the zone, uh, that, that I was proud
36 of is, is, I felt I brought fair and equal representation from a zone to both
37 shifts, uh, because I worked night shift until I actually got elected zone
38 and, uh, I got elected to zone in 1990, so you're lookin' at, at 14 years that
39 I spent my whole career on night shift and, and knew the, the woes and the
40 plight of a nightshift worker, if you will. That when I got elected zone, I,
41 uh, [chuckle] did several things, actually. Uh, was adamant about the fact
42 that I was gonna begin punchin' in. Uh, back then, uh, and not to, uh, not
43 to, uh, uh, [chuckle] destroy any, any involvement of shop committee
44 before then but, back then, bottom line, they cut a fat hog and had it where
45 the shop committeemen didn't have to ring in or out. And I was a young
46 junior one and I was bein' pummeled because, uh, "Who the hell you think

1 you are, Bernath? You're comin' in here and you're ringing in and out."
2 Well, I had one thing on my side, I felt, was the contract, the, the national
3 agreement that shows you will ring in and out. I said, y'know, "Just 'cause
4 you guys cut the fat hog..." – Now remember, I was the young, junior
5 member. Uh, I shouldn't say so young.
6

7 There was actually a woman, uh, Renida Taylor was, was on shop
8 committeemen. She was shop committee a couple terms before I was.
9 Uh, but I, I was, I was, I was the one that just said, "Hey, you all do what
10 you wanna do. I'm gonna ring in. I'm gonna ring out." Well, that led to,
11 uh, a whole lot of, uh, uh, arguments amongst my, my, my fellow, uh,
12 shop committee people and it ended up they, they cut a hog to where they,
13 they show 1 ring and that made it legal. It did make it legal by the, by the
14 national agreement and, uh, they, they were able to, I guess, uh, y'know,
15 do whatever they thought they had to do. Uh, so that was my rocky start
16 and then I also told'm all that, uh, "Hey, y'know, I noticed we're gettin'
17 paid..." – when I first come on, we were getting' paid 11 hours a day and I
18 said, "I noticed we're gettin' paid 11 hours a day, uh, no ring-ins or outs,
19 but I'm gonna ring in. I'm gonna ring in and, uh, out, and I'm gonna split
20 my shift. I'm gonna work, y'know, 5 hours on days, 5 hours on nights."
21

22 Well, that pissed a lot of'm off, uh, because, y'know, they thought they
23 had, I guess, the membership convinced that this shop committeeman job
24 was really a day-time job. Even though R.T. Taylor, I would submit,
25 probably spent the most of her time on nights, uh, when she was, like I
26 say, she was shop committee before I, I got there and she spent the
27 majority of her time on nights and, and obviously, she knew where her
28 political base was too. And, uh, y'know, so she, she kept her, her hours
29 there. So, I was happy that, y'know, and, and that pissed'm off. Well then,
30 also I, I began communicating regularly with my zone and I had a focus
31 that I was going to put out, uh, a quarterly letter to the, to my zone and
32 tell'm how many grievances were in the process, what steps they were at,
33 what we as a union were doin'. Well, that pissed'm off, y'know? "Ya,
34 yeah! What the hell are you tryin' to do? You're playing politics all the
35 damn time." Y'know? And all I said is, "No! I'm trying to keep the
36 membership informed." And, uh, y'know, I kept that as I moved on,
37 y'know, when I got to president, y'know, I, I, I put the, *[The Perspective*
38 *59:05]* out on a weekly basis. Before, it was, like, a quarterly thing, uh,
39 and that hit and miss. Uh, I, y'know, I, I was really focused on
40 communicatin' with the workers to try to build that pride in the union, uh,
41 that I felt was sorely missing, uh, with, with our membership.
42 So, y'know, communications was a, was a big, big thing for me, and, and
43 then, again, as I say, uh, th, the crème de la crème was, uh, [chuckle] was
44 in '92 when, when there was a dispute over, uh, what the hell was it? Oh,
45 oh, versem, ta, mass versus tag relief. Uh, we had, we had it... [tapping]
46

1 Doug Rademacher: [59:54] Garry, would you share with us again about the proud moment as
2 a, uh, shop committee where you said you, uh, the decision was made and
3 you led the people out of the plant? Can you tell us about that? Was that
4 a strike or was that, what exactly happened?
5

6 Garry Bernath: Yeah. It was, uh, we were, we hadn't yet resolved – Management wanted
7 to go to tag relief and that got to be the fashionable thing across the, the
8 corporation.
9

10 Doug Rademacher: [1:00:20] What is that?
11

12 Garry Bernath: Uh, tag relief would be, or excuse me, they wanted, I'm sorry, they wanted
13 to go to mass relief. We had tag relief. Tag relief was where, uh, you had
14 a relief man, which, oh, by the way, from a production worker's
15 perspective, that was one of the good jobs, y'know, that you could aspire
16 to be a relief man sometime and, and have one of these good jobs where
17 you bounced around and give everybody their, their relief time in
18 accordance with the national agreement. So, we had tag relief,
19 management wanted to go to mass relief because they knew they could do
20 away – in our instance, the number re, comes to my mind of over 300 jobs,
21 by going to mass relief. Just, that then, they would just shut the line down
22 for the 15 minutes, 16 minutes, whatever the case may be, uh, and
23 everybody would have relief at the same time. Uh, many, many [taggies
24 1:01:10] come at us (I was on shop committee as I say, at that time) that,
25 y'know, "Oh, people that go to this wouldn't never go back to tag relief."
26 And, y'know, they just missed the point that, from my mind, that those
27 were good jobs. Uh, that was the high seniority people were the relief
28 men. Them were the good jobs to where somebody could aspire, a
29 production worker could aspire to say, "Yeah, I wanna transfer to be a
30 relief man.
31

32 So, I really looked at it as, "No, it, it's more than whether or not I can set
33 down with Joe and Mary and, and chitchat during my relief time, or play
34 a, a hand of euchre during my relief time." It was, "You're wipin' out
35 good jobs." And, and I found that much more offensive than whether or
36 not – and, and guess what? You, when you got, when we had tag relief
37 you tended to go visit somebody that was on the line and, and chat with
38 them anyways as they were workin', y'know. It wasn't, it wasn't like I had
39 to have this mass shut down to, t'have a good time for 16 minutes. Like I
40 say, it was the loss of those good jobs that, that I found more offensive.
41 So, management was, was hell-bound to, to do that. We had it in our local
42 agreement. It was local agreement language, uh, that, that, uh, we, we
43 stood on and said, "No, our local agreement calls for tag relief and we're
44 not goin' to allow you guys..." – uh, just, uh, in mid-term! It wasn't like
45 we were up for a local agreement or anything, in mid-term, just wipe out,
46 uh, these relief men. And, and, y'know, then we were strugglin' too, as, as,

1 as we still do today, the loss of jobs, you know? And I mean, it, it was, it
2 was, it was a big deal. It was a big deal for me! And I believe it was a big
3 deal for my whole shop committeemen, or my whole shop committee
4 'cause we didn't get there, obviously, I didn't get there alone.
5

6 Uh, as, as things progressed, Jim Zupkus was the plant manager and I had
7 a, a good relationship with the plant manager, uh, and still do today. I
8 mean, uh, we're still, we still stay in touch and, and friends and I told Zub
9 then, as a junior member, I said, "Zub, we're walkin'!" And he goes, "No
10 you're not, Garry. You guys ain't gonna walk." I said, "Zub, I'm tellin' ya,
11 we're gonna walk." Now obviously, part of mine was a bluff 'cause I had
12 no clue whether we were gonna walk or not. This, these negotiations for
13 what they wanted t'do, eliminate the tag relief, went on for probably 3 or 4
14 weeks. There's a process that the regional, uh, international rep comes in
15 and debates the issues. Then, Solidarity House will send an international
16 rep in to debate the issues.
17

18 And then, uh, wh, the day we walked out, uh, Steve Yokich was the
19 president of the, or vice president of the GM department. He sent in, uh,
20 the guy I work for now, uh, Cal Rapson was his top AA, administrative
21 assistant, and he came in and [chuckle] – a lot of people probably don't
22 know it, I, I, I guess probably old news now but, but, when the final push
23 came down to whether or not we were going to strike over this issue, uh,
24 the shop committee was divided. Uh, it was actually, uh, the final vote
25 about whether or not we were gonna walk was 3 shop committee members
26 said walk and 4 said settle. Uh, vice president, or Cal Rapson said, "I'm
27 not gonna divide the shop committee this way." Uh, a lotta tense
28 moments, I mean, y'know, goes through your head when you know you're
29 walkin a membership out that door on a strike. Uh, a lotta tense moments.
30 A lotta interesting stories I won't get into at this time but, it was tough
31 times for us and, and, and thank God, Cal had the wisdom to not divide
32 that shop committee.
33

34 Well, as, as it progressed, and it got down to that Friday morning, when
35 we set the strike deadline at 10:00 in the morning, as it got down to that
36 morning, uh, they picked off one of the 3, or, yeah, they picked off one of
37 the 3. So now, it was only 2 shop committee members, myself and, uh,
38 well, R.T. Taylor was the other one, that said, "No. We're, we wanna
39 walk." So now it got down, there it is [chuckle] 9:30 in the morning, uh,
40 the international, that, Cal Rapson says, "I'm leavin'. Y'all talk about it.
41 Dick Bennett was the chairman at the time and Ted Hartman was the
42 president. He says, "You all talk about it and I'll be back." So, uh, a lotta
43 words. Uh, a lotta, lotta, lotta heavy, heavy debate and discussions. A
44 lotta hollerin' an arguin' and, and, and fightin' took on. At that time, uh,
45 they take a vote. Uh, Ron, Ron Perry was actually the third one that they
46 picked off and I say they, the 4 that said, "No, don't strike."

1
2 Uh, had everybody, had the district's position to walk the floor, tell
3 everybody to shut'er down, we're walkin.'" Everything was in place. We
4 take that final vote. It now is a 5 to 2 vote and I'm settin' there now as a
5 junior member on the shop committee thinkin', "Oh my God," y'know, "I
6 can't believe we're rollin' over on this one." Uh, s, Cal comes back into the
7 room and says, uh, "What was the as...", – well actually, he came back in,
8 talked lightly for a few moments. You could tell there were some, some
9 hurt feelings, if you will. He pulls Dick Bennett and Ted Hartman out,
10 said, "Well, what was the vote?" And Bennett said, "It's now 5 to 2." Cal
11 made a phone call to Steven Yokich and Cal came back into that room.
12 Dick Bennett and, uh, Ted Hartman came back in and, and were kinda
13 smug about the fact that, y'know, "We're not walkin'," y'know, "Chill out,
14 Bernath, it's not gonna happen."

15
16 Uh, I'll never forget the feelin' I had when, when, after Cal talked to
17 Steven Yokich and he came back into that room with one of our local 602
18 t-shirts on, I hollered out, "Yes!" Because I knew that shirt was on for a
19 reason. He knew we were gonna walk out that gate. He knew the media
20 was gonna be out there. Ruben Burks had already lined it up with buses to
21 be out there to support the members and the shop committee when, when
22 they walked outta that front, front gate and, uh, we were gonna go out on
23 strike and I thought to myself, and I was bein' somewhat selfish, I said,
24 "My God, we do have an international union!" Uh, the strike ended up
25 lastin' only, uh, I guess it was 4 days. We were back to work Tuesday
26 and, uh, y'know, it ended up that, that it was settled over the issue that we
27 would let the membership vote on st, on mass versus tag. I immediately
28 got out the pen and started writing letters to the membership. I remember
29 the phrase I used because I'd, uh, spent some time at, at NUMMI as a shop
30 committeeman. GM, at the time, uh, NUMMI was a joint venture with
31 Toyota that they were takin' a lotta the leadership from local unions out to
32 Fremont, California, and showin'm the NUMMI way of doin' business or,
33 uh, the Japanese, the Toyota production system.

34
35 And, uh, I remember what I said in that letter. I, there were several things
36 I said in the letter but I, I said, y'know, "Vote to humanize the workplace,
37 not NUMMI-nize the workplace." And, fortunately, uh, we won that.
38 [chuckle] I remember the shop committeemen again comin' up to me. Ron
39 Perry, a good friend of mine, said, "Garry, your, your, your bitin' off more
40 than you can chew. You should not be goin' out there tellin' the people
41 how to vote," and this and that.

42
43 I remember when the vote got take, the personnel director, Jim Gaunt,
44 called Dick Bennett at the time and I, I remember this like it happened
45 yesterday. I was settin' at my desk. Dick Bennett answers the phone, or
46 actually, he didn't answer the phone. It was given to'm. And R.T.

1 answered the phone. I think she said, "Well, it's Jim Gaunt. And this was
2 just after the vote. Now, Management played such a part in tryin' to get
3 the people, I mean, I'd never seen nothin' like it. They shut the line down.
4 They treated our members like they were a bunch'a idiots. They didn't
5 know where the union hall was. If you woulda seen it, there were signs
6 posted throughout the plant that Management put up with arrows pointin'
7 to where the union hall was, how to get to the union hall. And I, I,
8 y'know, I mean, they took their tactic and, and tried to sway the vote their
9 way, and it just pissed me off more that I would come the other way and
10 try to get people to, to say, "No. Vote for tag relief."

11
12 Uh, we did it, uh, and, and the membership, thank God, voted to keep tag
13 and then that rolled on to somethin' that I affectionately called the rest of
14 my career, Bloody April. Uh, that was when Management come back at
15 us again and basically threw out threats of, "No future product," uh,
16 y'know, like they typically do, uh, "unless you guys do away with this tag
17 relief." And, uh, I refer to it, Bloody April, because we went through that
18 struggle, it seemed like we ended that struggle in October. The vote was
19 either the end of October or first of November and the membership
20 supported, y'know, their desire, and which I thought was their desire, to
21 keep tag relief and, uh, it was that next April, uh, April of '93, that
22 Management then come back at us again and, uh, unfortunately, we lost
23 the, uh, we lost tag relief and then went to mass relief. [chuckle]
24

25 But it was certainly a proud moment that, uh, uh, y'know, even my brother
26 today, who works at the Olds, said, "Well," y'know, and he's even said,
27 "y'know, you, at least you had the feelin' of doin' that." And I think it's a
28 deep-seated feeling of everybody on that assembly line to just say, "There,
29 take that," y'know, and walk outta that place and... [chuckle] I, I don't take
30 that lightly but I, I, I think there was, there was a lotta whoops and
31 hollerin' at the point that, that they seen their yo, local union leadership
32 standin' up and sayin', "No. Bull shit. You ain't gonna do this." And it
33 was, like I say, a certainly a proud part of my, uh, of my leadership, local
34 leadership time.
35

36 Doug Rademacher: Gary Judy.
37

38 Gary Judy: Oh, I'd like to add that, uh, even the Wall Street Journal, uh, supported, uh,
39 you in that effort.
40

41 Garry Bernath: Oh, yeah.
42

43 Gary Judy: Conservative business paper stated that it was, the strike was, uh, it wasn't
44 necessary, and it was Management's fault that we went out on strike, and if
45 we woulda had, uh, better management in the plant that that strike never
46 woulda happened.

1
2 Garry Bernath: Yup. You're right Gary. The fact of it is, I still got that article. I, I, I was,
3 uh, I still read the Wall Street Journal today. Uh, some people question
4 me doin' that...
5
6 Marilyn Coulter: [inaudible 1:11:37]
7
8 Garry Bernath: ...but, uh, I still read that and I, I, I got that article. Tha, s, you're right.
9 They said, "Due to local management blunders, that, that thing never
10 woulda happened." And it was mishandled by, by management locally.
11 Uh, me and Zub, I, it was, I had, I had some fun with that. Uh, y'know, I,
12 I was touchin' on Jim Gaunt callin' down there, and I'll never forget it, that
13 Dick answered the phone, and I'll never forget what Dick said. He said, he
14 said, "You sure you wanna talk ta him?" and I was sittin' at my desk in the
15 work center and, when Dick said that, y'know, I didn't think he was even
16 wantin' ta talk to me, but Dick Bennett, the chairman at the time, handed
17 me the phone, and the PD says, "Congratulations. You won." And,
18 y'know, I mean, that just showed the mindset of Management at that time.
19 I mean, it, it wasn't about me winnin', I mean, really, it was about
20 [chuckle] keepin' them good jobs and, y'know, I mean, y'know, I
21 understood that that was a good job in the trim shop, but I remember that,
22 that local personnel director sayin', "Congratulations. You won." And I
23 responded to'm. I said, "Well, no, Jim. It wasn't about you losin' or me
24 winnin'. It was about the jobs and the good jobs that a production worker
25 can, can aspire to." And that's where I was at. But...
26
27 Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. Garry, [1:12:50] did you attend union meetings all
28 along?
29
30 Garry Bernath: Uh, no. I actually, when I first got elected, my first time I got elected
31 alternate committeeman was in '81. And, uh, uh, then it was a requirement
32 to, to attend. I never, I never did attend a union meeting. I remember as,
33 uh, when I first hired in, and, and it was due to my union experience
34 [chuckle] in the, in the, in, uh, at, at Eugene Welding, that I did walk over.
35 Bob Somers was the president at the time, and I walked over and
36 introduced myself to Bob Somers and said, "Hey, y'know, I believe in the
37 union." Shared my little story with him about Eugene Welding. He
38 appear, he was, he was, he was kind, but it wasn't like, "Hey, brother, uh,
39 come along. We got somethin' for you." Uh, then I, the, the union was
40 really, uh, I, I, and, and I shouldn't say this, uh, because I didn't know and
41 I didn't try crackin' them doors open but it, it really appeared to me like a,
42 a close-knit club, y'know, that, uh, "We'll, we'll, we'll decide who is going
43 to move along and who, who, who will and who won't." And, uh, y'know,
44 'n havin' said that, I would also add that, y'know, that's another prob, point
45 I have is that, uh, we never...
46

1 Well, that was, back then there was caucus politics, uh, but that got broken
2 up, thank God, and it appeared as if we didn't move into – we didn't have
3 caucus politics as a local union, and, uh, that is, I think, a credit to, to our
4 union and to our membership. I, I remember union flyers out there that,
5 that the anti-caucus would attack people who were tryin' to run, they said,
6 as a slate, but it was a caucus. Uh, and we would, uh, we, those that didn't
7 believe in caucuses would, would attack them to say, "Well, we don't need
8 caucuses. We had'm here once. You remember what it was like then."
9 So, we played a lot of games back and forth, uh, you know. Politics are
10 politics, y'know.
11
12 Doug Rademacher: [snapping] [1:14:52] Do you, uh, vote in all elections 'n have you, uh...
13
14 Garry Bernath: Never miss. Never miss. Local union elections. The fact of it is, uh, I
15 even used to come back and vote for my district when I first went on staff
16 and, and I've been instructed that that's not quite too proper, so, uh, I, I get
17 back for the e-board. I'll be back, I know we got our constitutional
18 convention election comin' up. I still stay in touch, uh, uh, with the local
19 via the internet, uh, and, and y'know, I, I used to give Art a hard time
20 because when I was there, and I don't know, I think it was prob'bly more
21 because we had such a long-serving president, or secretary to the
22 president, but we would always send, uh, any, any information about the
23 locals, Marilyn would always send out to the, the past presidents that, that
24 were still alive and, and I think it was really a connectiveness. That they
25 always felt comfortable about just comin' up, be it Bob Somers, Oscar
26 Wade, uh, y'know, a host of presidents that were there before would feel
27 comfortable comin' up and be able to have a conversation with the settin'
28 president because we always kept'm in the loop. And I used to beat up
29 Art. I said, "Hey, Art, I, y'know, I don't get *The Perspective* anymore,
30 y'know?"
31
32 When I first moved on, I, I'd gotten *The Perspective*. It was once a month.
33 Marilyn would stuff 4 of'm in an envelope and sent it to me as a past
34 president. And, uh, y'know, that's gone now. I, I don't, I don't suffer from
35 it 'cause I've got access to the Internet, but I'm sure Bob Somers, uh,
36 certainly isn't, y'know, kept up to date 'n I, I, it was just a nice touch I
37 thought, uh, for a, for a 30, 32-cent stamp, y'know.
38
39 Doug Rademacher: Yeah. Good point. Um, [1:16:37] do you participate in union-sponsored
40 activities?
41
42 Garry Bernath: Oh, yeah. Yeah. It's, uh, y'know, obviously [chuckle] 'cause of the
43 position I hold as an international rep, uh, I'm told – It, it's kinda funny.
44 As politics roll around, because I'm, I'm headquartered in, in, uh, Detroit,
45 they tell me who I'll work on. They tell me that I'll go door to door in
46 Warren, or, or, Grosse Pointe, or wherever and, and, and then I'll get calls.

1 It's interesting. I'll get calls from, from, from local activists here and,
2 y'know, I, I politely tell'm, y'know, they want me to do a door to door in
3 Clinton County or somethin' else and I said, "Well, y'know, that'd be nice
4 but if I'm not in Warren doin' a door to door this weekend, uh, I'm in
5 trouble, y'know." So, it's funny how my politics – and when I say
6 national, I ju, uh, I'm referrin' to national polic, how that's all shifted down
7 to, uh, Detroit area, away from this area, but, yeah, it's, it's somethin' we
8 do and, and it's somethin' I do regardless, I mean. It's, once you got it in
9 your blood, you're gonna, y'know...
10
11 Doug Rademacher: And, when you were president, you did start a few, uh, social activities,
12 or...
13
14 Garry Bernath: Yeah.
15
16 Doug Rademacher: ...cultural programs. [1:17:53] Why don't you share a little bit about that?
17
18 Garry Bernath: Well, the whole idea, is, uh, and, and, Marilyn, Marilyn Coulter was, was
19 obviously a big part of it. She was a civil rights chair. Uh, I think you
20 were elected the second time when I got elected first time as president...
21
22 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
23
24 Garry Bernath: ...and, uh, she, she was the, uh, the, the godmother, if you will [chuckle]
25 of this, uh, Black History program, uh, that was run in conjunction with,
26 with Black History Month and, uh, she was the spark plug behind that
27 made that happen. Uh, I was tickled pink, I mean, you know. It, it was
28 funny. Uh [chuckle] I used to go in the plant and would have some older
29 white gentleman, if you will, [chuckle] say, "Hey, what is, this's bull shit!
30 What are you doin'?" Y'know, uh, and "Why are we supportin' this with
31 union dues 'n, and stuff like this?" And, and I would respond that, "Hey,
32 listen, uh, what, what eth, ethnicity are you? What, are, are you German?
33 Let's have a German fest!" I, I said, "I'm not a, I'm not adverse to doin'
34 anything that's gonna bring our membership together because that's what ,
35 that's what a union's all about." And I think that's what we've lost as a
36 union. I mean you, you look back at, at the ole girl and, y'know, there was
37 a bar setup in there. You go back in the history of our union, members
38 used to come over there and socialize at that bar! And, and, and we've
39 really lost that as, as a union movement. [sneezing] Uh, even today, uh,
40 some say it may be the fix for it, uh, you, y'know.
41
42 Not to get off hand, but, I mean, y'know, what, what mega churches are
43 doin'! That it is a family, it, this is where you come to enjoy, whether its
44 [coughing] bowling, whether it's cards, whether it's whatever. You, you've
45 got to center around a social activity. Havin' set aside the fact that, that as
46 a society, we've seemed't, y'know, get glued to the TV and our remote

1 control and everything's okay in my house, the hell with the rest of'm.
2 We've lost that as a society but, but I think that's the true, the true meaning
3 of a union. And, and, and off of the, the Black History program, that is, I,
4 I'm proud to say, is still successful and rollin' today, uh, y'know, we did,
5 uh, for National Hispanic Month, we did that. We, we sprung boarded
6 from that. We did a, a Women's Day program, and, and a lotta good
7 things.

8
9 And, and, and y'know, it's intererestin' because none of that, and, and, and
10 I follow our local union enough now that I see now that, that the members
11 that are a part of that believe so strongly in it that, that they're even doin'
12 fund raisers to support those activities! Where, back when I was there, it
13 wasn't a big cost. I mean, you, you might throw \$500, maybe \$1500 seed
14 money into this, uh, and, and, and it just took off, and, and they were
15 great. I, uh, every one I spoke at, I mean, the Black History one was
16 [chuckle] was the greatest program, and then, low and behold, along
17 comes the, the Hispanics in the plant that put on a first-rate program and it
18 was all volunteers, y'know, and, and that's where I put it back in, in the
19 membership's face, those that wanted, uh, ta piss and moan about it, is,
20 "Hey, come along. You got, you got a day that, that you wanna
21 celebrate?"

22
23 Y'know, at one time, there was some, on the e-board, that, that I believe
24 weren't thinkin' the right way, that, y'know. They wanted, uh,
25 "International Solidarity Day. Can't we just do away with all these?"
26 And, y'know, I mean, that did away with the pride that, that was associated
27 with that event, and, y'know, they, they missed the point, you know. I
28 mean, it wasn't, y'know, "D'you wanna have an International Solidarity
29 Day? I'm all about that too! When do you wanna schedule it? But we're
30 gonna still have the other ones as long as the motion comes aboard and the
31 board supports it." And that's what happened, y'know, and, and one of the
32 other programs that, y'know, I was proud of is, is we expanded the, the
33 bible. I mean, when I first got over there, there were literally brothers and
34 sisters or brothers and brothers fightin' over who was gonna get the bible
35 of their parent that passed away, and I just thought that was just totally
36 ridiculous, y'know. I, we, well, this is, this is nuts! Uh, we need to do
37 away with that 'n, and we changed bylaws to do it.

38
39 Uh, the ring program. Twenty-five-year ring program was somethin' that I
40 was, was happy to establish and start and it's still goin' today and, and, uh,
41 y'know, uh. It was, it was, it was a great program. I, I enjoyed it.
42 Uh, uh, I, I personally delivered each ring to the, to the member that, that
43 got it and, uh, out of all those rings I delivered, I only remember one
44 person, uh, [chuckle] and it was funny, 'cause it goes back to, uh, when I
45 was on shop committeemen. This person got discharged and, uh,
46 [chuckle] long story. But anyways, I got'm back to work and he didn't

1 think it was quick enough, y'know. And, and, believe me, I got the guy
2 back from a discharge in 3 weeks and that was, that, that was a record.
3 He, he certainly had nothing' ta complain about. Uh, he got, got fired for
4 stealin', and it was the, the evidence was pretty cold and pretty hard. I
5 mean, it was there. He, he had, he, he was guilty, uh, but he was a good
6 worker, made a mistake, and, uh, was able to convince management to
7 bring'm back. Well, that member, for some reason, I handed him his ring
8 and, and stuck out my hand to shake his hand and, uh, he, uh, refused to
9 shake my hand. And it was, I, I said, "Whoa!" I said, "That kinda
10 surprised me." And he said, "Nah." He says, "Not, not, not time you
11 made me set out bein' discharged for doin' nothin' wrong." I, "Well,
12 okay," and walked away.

13

14 But, y'know, the membership loved that program. I enjoyed gettin' out
15 there, seein' the membership, uh, that's what it's all about, see.

16

17Marilyn Coulter: Um...

18

19Doug Rademacher: Marilyn Coulter.

20

21Marilyn Coulter: ...Garry, you worked in the plant, came in young, you made leaps and
22 bounds. Uh, you did wonderful things and I will take the time to say
23 thank you for bein' a president to support those programs.

24

25Garry Bernath: You're welcome.

26

27Marilyn Coulter: Because...

28

29Garry Bernath: Thanks for bein' here.

30

31Marilyn Coulter: ...they found out what the UAW did for the civil rights movement. My
32 little commercial.

33

34Garry Bernath: Yeah.

35

36Marilyn Coulter: But you did all these things as a president. Um, you said the workers were
37 great. Now, as we sit right here, right across the street, they are literally
38 tearing down our facility. It's closed. [1:23:54] How, what d'you think
39 about that? How does it affect you?

40

41Garry Bernath: Uh, y'know, when I come around the corner for the interview today,
42 I looked there and watched the machines gobblin' away [chuckle] at the, at
43 the ole girl there and I'm thinkin', "Damn." Uh, y'know, I mean, it's, it's
44 bittersweet, uh, you know. I knew when I, I knew when I left fer, fer the
45 international staff, I felt, uh, well, I could've accomplished a few more
46 things. There were some things that I – I still had ideas I wanted to do.

1 Uh, one bein' makin' our local union an amalgamated union because I felt
2 that was the only chance for growth the way the industry was goin' and,
3 and, and I still believe that today. But that's another story. Uh, y, y'know,
4 it, it's sad because, y'know, I always refer to Fisher Body and, uh, y'know,
5 y, y'see a part of your life just getting' gobbled up and put through a
6 crusher and, uh, y'know, steel hauled out'n hauled away. That's sad. But,
7 but on the other hand, a, a, as I referred to before we started tapin', it's, it's
8 like the phoenix, y'know. Out of the ashes, rises a new facility. And I
9 certainly know, uh, [chuckle] that that knew facility wi, will, will be good
10 for our longevity, so that's, that's an obvious plus.

11
12 Uh, I knew that when I left, uh, y'know, I mean, I was, uh – Marilyn, you
13 were on the e-board. Doug, you were. There was no doubt in anybody's
14 mind, uh, when I left that I knew that new facility was gonna get beat,
15 built. I mean, uh, Mark Hogan told me, "Garry, y, ya landed a good one."
16 Uh, [chuckle] at one time, uh, they were talkin' about us getting' the
17 Cadillac facility 'n I remember, uh, at the time, me talkin' to, to Mark
18 Hogan and Jim Zupkus at the time and me sayin', "I don't wanna build
19 Cadillacs." And Zupkus kinda looked, "Garry, y'know, we can, we think
20 we can make some things. We can rearrange, get the body plant,
21 everything on over there. They can continue buildin' 'n we'll, we'll, we'll
22 keep this ole thing goin' and, and build Cadillacs here." And I said, "Nah,
23 Zub." I said, y'know, "It's not, uh, a high-volume car." And I, I, I felt
24 strongly about that, knowin' the industry the way I did, that, y'know, "I, I
25 appreciate that and I know I have one in the barn, but, but, man, what
26 about that other project?"

27
28 'Course, back then it wasn't the land, it wasn't anything, y'know. It was
29 just, we, they knew there was gonna be a new project brought on line.
30 And I said, "Y'know, I'd really, really like to have that." And at that time,
31 they didn't even have the, the land bought. They didn't know, I mean,
32 there was speculation. Of course, everything's tight lidded 'cause they
33 don't want no, nobody out there capitalizin' on the real estate. But they
34 knew they were gonna, uh, try to acquire a large group of, of property. I, I
35 sat on a, a committee with the mayor of Lansing. I, I, I knew it was gonna
36 happen. There was no doubt. The day I left, I felt like, I felt good that I, I
37 at least left somethin' here or, I, I felt I was a part of, of makin' the future
38 stable here in Lansing and, uh, y'know, felt good about that. So, while it's,
39 y'know, it's, it's bittersweet. I mean, y'know, you hate to see the ole girl
40 go. I, uh, that, while I say it's nice to have that new facility, that isn't, it, it
41 will not be a part of, of a community like, like Fisher Body was.

42
43 I mean, y'know, uh, y'can probably tell by my earlier comments, I, I like to
44 toss a few back and have a few pops every once in a while. And, and the
45 uniqueness of, uh, of, of bein' in a community like we are at Fisher Body,
46 is not gonna be replicated out there in the field in [inaudible 1:27:24]

1 Township. I mean, y'know, wh, I, I don't, I don't wanna emphasize on the
2 fact that we had a bar on the north, east, south, and west corners but, th,
3 that's what gets established around, uh, uh, an enterprise like Fisher Body.
4

5 And, and, and in turn, other people prosper out of the, uh, out of, out of the
6 community and I think that, that was unique. I mean, it was, it's unique.
7 Th, the school, y'know. I mean goin' outside and just simply getting' some
8 fresh air 'n, and watchin' the kids over at, at, over at the playground across
9 the street. That's now gonna be a part of the new facility. They're just
10 little things that, that make the workplace a part of the community that
11 goes beyond diggin' into our pocket and, and sharin' our, our wealth with
12 the community. It, it just, it, it, you can't replicate that. And it, it, wa,
13 y'know, and, and then – so that's the saddest part, uh, but, y'know, and
14 then, seein' the ole girl, I mean. Our union hall has got a proud, proud
15 history. I mean, y'know, when, when the governor of, uh, of the state
16 comes at a ribbon cutting, I think that says a lot about the labor movement
17 at that time and, uh, y'know, tha, that, of course, was, uh, uh, G.
18 Mennen Williams. "Soapy" Williams was there helpin' cut the ribbon on
19 our union hall and, and, y'know, you don't see that any more
20 unfortunately. Uh, so, sad but, uh, I guess there is some, some sweetness
21 there and some light at the end of the tunnel. Certainly, great t'have a new
22 facility.
23

24 Marilyn Coulter: Garry, one other question from me. [1:28:53] Um, what would you say
25 are some things that people may not know about factory workers that
26 might be something that they thought true but was totally untrue? What
27 are some of the things about factory workers that people, that you found to
28 be shocking, a little bit different?
29

30 Garry Bernath: Well, I would, I would classify it more, Marilyn, as, uh – y'know, we all
31 know what the stereotypes are and, and we all know how, how, how, how
32 false they are. Uh, y'know, my years as a union rep, y'know, a, whether it
33 was the first line supervisor or someone who didn't work in a factory say,
34 "Y'know, Garry, you spend 95 percent of your time representing 5 percent
35 of the people." And, and I would even have, y'know, uh – I was, been
36 called the enabler. I've been called a lotta – I, I take'm as badge of honors,
37 but some people tryin' to whack me, like, "What're you doin' for that
38 deadbeat, that drunk, that druggy?" Whatever the case may be? And I
39 said, "Well, I'm representin'm to the best of my ability." And, and, and
40 would actually have members say, y'know, "Garry, give it up," y'know,
41 "he's a loser."
42

43 Y'know, and I'd say, y'know, 'n my, my, my quick response was that,
44 "Y'know what?" I, I says, "Y'know, I know you don't put in a lotta calls,"
45 but I says, "you just need to, t, t'be happy and rest assured that, if I can do
46 that for what you term as a loser, 'n I don't look at'm that way, I look at'm

1 as somebody that needs some help, uh, just think what I can do for you!"
2 And it'd bring a smile to their face and they, they'd nod. Uh, still not
3 happy that I got what they thought of as a loser out of a disciple or, or a
4 discharge, or whatever the case may be.
5
6 And, and then, like I say, as that circled around, y'know, I, I remember
7 [chuckle] those very people would be told, "Okay, everybody, clean out
8 your lockers," y'know, "we're gonna rearrange the area." At, at, at, uh,
9 y'know, a shut down or a changeover they useta call'm. And that same
10 person that mighta thought I took care of the losers, well, lo and behold,
11 he thought it, "Now, geez. These bolts or these, uh, emblems have been in
12 my locker for all this time." And, y'know, uh, put'm in the lunchbox and,
13 and on they go home. Nothin'! Nothin' that amounted to a hilla beans to
14 General Motors but, unfortunately, the security guard said, "Hey, open
15 your lunchbox." And, oops! Y'know, now this 28-year man – I
16 remember, uh, uh, I remember there was a host of'm in the trim shop when
17 I was shop committeeman. There was about 4 or 5 of'm that got – long
18 seniority people that got popped on that changeover time when they say,
19 "Clean out your locker." And they got, I mean, it was diddle in their thing.
20 It was nothin' major. And, uh, got that discharged, that, that I was able ta,
21 y'know, get the wheels in motion, uh, and, and, and get'm back to work in
22 short order. And, uh, y'know, it just makes ya feel good. I, I, uh, a long-
23 winded st, uh, dog burial, but I think most of those are stereotypes.
24
25 I, I, we're just like everybody else. I, I've said it. We're, we're not here,
26 y'know, I said it earlier in the thing, we're not here out of a lifelong vision
27 to build Pontiac Gran Ams. We're here because we enjoy the communities
28 we live in and this job affords us the opportunity to do what we really,
29 really, really enjoy. And that, that's, that's coachin' the kids. That's
30 partakin' in our community, at our church's activities. And, and, y'know,
31 whatever it might be. That's what it, it's really all about and, and those
32 auto line works are just like anybody else. Uh, y'know, I, [chuckle] I,
33 they're – the ole labor relations foreman, y'know, y'hear it now, we're
34 getting paid too much, we're gettin' paid too much, y'know. It, the old
35 foreman that says, "You, you, you pay what it takes to hire and retain a
36 skilled workforce." That's how we got where we're at today. That's what
37 we are today, is a skilled workforce. Uh, that skill may very well be the
38 ability to set there and do that same thing, y'know, car after car, hour after
39 hour, minute after minute. That is a skill, uh, that I'll never, I'll never
40 discredit anybody for havin' because there's a whole lotta people that have
41 come and gone that didn't have that skill and that ability to do that.
42
43 Marilyn Coulter: I know, also, you talk about skill and you talk about one of your good
44 friends, um, Mike Roach...
45
46 Garry Bernath: Mm-hm.

1
2 Marilyn Coulter: ...who was somebody who had went to college...
3
4 Garry Bernath: Uh...
5
6 Marilyn Coulter: ...had a large degree, and he did, later, leave.
7
8 Garry Bernath: Yeah.
9
10 Marilyn Coulter: [1:33:19] But did you also find, through your travels, that there were a lot
11 of people who worked on that line who had degrees but they had to come
12 there to get a good lifestyle?
13
14 Garry Bernath: Oh, yeah. Yeah. We, uh, Jack, the attorney, y'know. There were people
15 that had law practices that came in to that factory every night and, uh,
16 y'know, continued workin' for General Motors and, and, that was for, I
17 mean, uh, that was for the benefits and, and, y'know. We did get paid
18 well. Uh, we got paid what we were worth. Uh, I would maintain we all
19 used to joke when time-and-a-half kicked in that, "Finally! We're gettin'
20 paid what we're worth." But, no, there were a lotta, lotta good – and, and,
21 and they took those skills, uh – they tell me that nowadays they're tappin'
22 in ta those, that skill set, uh, and tryin' to have them more participative in
23 the workplace or give them opportunities to, to contribute in the
24 workplace. I, I got mixed feelings on all that but, but, but they would take
25 them skills and them talents and you would find them pour them into their
26 communities, into their churches and everything else. Like I say, they did,
27 we, we do what we do over there so we can enjoy what we really enjoy
28 doin' and that's spendin' time with our family in our communities and, and
29 in our churches and stuff, so...yeah.
30
31 Doug Rademacher: Garry, I, uh, Doug Rademacher. I was, uh, just recently at the recognition
32 of the sit-down strikers, and there's about a dozen left, uh, the 1937 sit-
33 down strike that gained the, uh, the right to be the sole bargainer for the
34 United Aut, uh, the, the auto workers across America. As we area out of
35 time today, and you bein' on international staff where, uh, labor
36 movement's at an all-time low – [1:35:09} got anything to say about...
37
38 Garry Bernath: [chuckle]
39
40 Doug Rademacher: ...what's, [1:35:12] what d'ya see, what d'ya see for the future?
41
42 Garry Bernath: It's, y'know, I've never seen, I could talk for hours on this, but I've never
43 seen such a orchestrated effort by the anti-union or anti, I would go so far
44 as anti-American, y'know. That, that, that we moved to this
45 Walmartization of America, I call it, that, that, it's, y'know – capitalism
46 has almost become consumerism. That, that, y'know, it isn't really about

1 jobs. It isn't really about your communities. It isn't really about anything.
2 What it is about is gettin' the consumer the cheapest product you possibly
3 can and, and, and, that bein' driven by the anti-right to work, uh, the anti-
4 union forces. If y'go back in our history, there's no doubt in my mind,
5 why those forces are tryin' to destroy the labor movement. There's no
6 doubt in my mind because in our heyday, we controlled it. We, we was,
7 we was controlling, uh, we was electing, we was getting respect out of, out
8 of not only State House and not out of our house and senate and governor
9 here in Michigan, but in, in Washington, D.C., the entire congress. The
10 influence that we had of gettin' those people in place come back 10-fold,
11 back to our members. A lot of our members didn't understand it. Uh, a lot
12 of our members, I don't know, were probably votin' for the ones that were
13 takin' the jobs outta this country.

14
15 But, y, ya can't help but think that, and hope, uh, that someday we will, we
16 will like [chuckle] like ole Fisher Body, we will rise again, y'know? Uh,
17 that, that people will finally wake up and smell the coffee and say, "Hey,
18 y'know, I, now I do see the dots are connected." Y'know? It, it, it
19 probably gets a lotta play, uh, and, and how true it is, y'know, Walter
20 Reuther sayin', y'know, there is a direct relationship between the ballot
21 box and the bread box. Uh, I, if I didn't, if I haven't said that a thousand
22 times while I was president, I, I still repeat it and, and people understand
23 that, I hope. But, unfortunately, unfortunately, the anti's, uh, held the
24 Republican Party, destroyin', destroyin' this country. It just blows me
25 away. I mean, how we can be talkin' and seein', y'know, the loss of jobs
26 that have happened. How they can even entertain now, "Well, let's go to
27 Taiwan and let them in." What little trade tariffs we got that still support
28 our workers, uh, they wanna do away with them.

29
30 And, and, y'know, if this Walmartization continues of America, that's what
31 I call it, uh, I don't know, I don't know what the answer is, y'know? I, I, it,
32 it befuddles me. Uh, as a union, y'know, we don't, we don't connect,
33 unfortunately, the way we used to. Uh, and maybe it was, y'know – the
34 sit-down strikers seen the worst of times. And, and, y'know, I, I, it, I like
35 to think that the educational system would make people understand that
36 they're the worst of times. But, unfortunately, you crack open a, a history
37 book in, in schools today, if y'got one paragraph about the UAW and
38 Walter Reuther, who, y'know, I, I would tell groups, I still tell groups, I,
39 y'know, if, if y'looked at it, y'know, the '70s, that, my God, just think
40 where this, this country would be if, if, if Jackie Kennedy, and I would say
41 Bobby Kennedy, more so than, than, than John, uh, Martin Luther King,
42 Walter Reuther were still alive today, the course that this country woulda
43 took and, and where we would be today. I think, no one's appealed to the
44 masses like those folks did. The sad part of it is, that was in the '60s,
45 y'know? [chuckle] And, and, and we were makin' gains, social gains,
46 back then that have just, I, I don't know!

1 Name a social gain since those folks were alive! There, there, there's
2 zilch! There's zilch! I, I, other than what you see comin' from the labor
3 movement and that's in collective bargaining! We don't have the success
4 in Washington D.C. like we have anym, we used to have. And so, y'know,
5 it, one could say, "Well, what we need is a", y'know, and I hear this all the
6 time, "We need, why, we oughta just shut this country down." I don't
7 know we'd accomplish! I mean, to be honest with ya. Maybe people say,
8 "Oh, wow, geez." Y'know? But we found that our own members, uh,
9 come through the back door and, and heard us. I mean, y'know, look at
10 the struggles we've had.

11
12 Uh, Caterpillar's the one that comes to mind the most. Y'know, there was
13 a 6-year struggle there that, that they basically bent us over a stump, to put
14 it bluntly. And, and, and the workers come back crawlin' at, at, at a much
15 reduced wage, much reduced benefits, everything! Uh, we just negotiated
16 that, re-negotiated that contract. Those folks were on par and ahead. The
17 fact of it is, the, the, we'd always would use the Ag industry ta, ta, ta
18 promote the auto industry. I mean, it was a give and take. Hell, sometimes
19 the Ag had a better contract than the, than the auto industry did. But we
20 always used to swap back'n forth ideas and grow together. Uh, today,
21 they're far behind us. They're far behind us. Uh, at, at one time, they were
22 par with us, so, y'know?

23
24 I, I don't know, Doug what the, what the answer is, uh. I, I'm waitin' for
25 that, I'm waitin' for the next Bobby Kennedy [chuckle] or Walter Reuther
26 or Martin Luther King ta, ta, ta move forward. I mean, it's, it's, it's sad.
27 It's a sad testament ta the way the, the, I, I believe, the national politics
28 have went in this country. But I guess it's, it's evolutionary. I don't know.
29 Y'hope – the old sayin', "History repeats itself." I hope I see it repeat itself
30 in my lifetime because I, I was a benefactor of the good times. [coughing]
31 And I'm only, this, y'know, this September I'll have my 30 years in. I tell
32 you what, in 1976, when, earlier when I talked about the PPH's day, the
33 vision, I, I believed in my mind, "By God, we're gonna have a day off a
34 month!" When we lost'm, we had 9, y'know, the auto industry went on
35 tough times in '8, the leadership made the tough decisions, and that went
36 out the door. But, I believe, y'know, that, that – I hope I'm alive to see
37 history repeat itself [chuckle] 'cause it'll be a great, great day.

38
39 Doug Rademacher: Well, it's been a pleasure interviewing you. Uh, we thank you for takin'
40 the time outta your time...

41
42 Garry Bernath: Thank you for, uh...

43
44 Doug Rademacher: ...and uh...

45
46 Garry Bernath: ...I appreciate the invite.

1
2Doug Rademacher: ...takin' a moment to share with the, uh, students out there in the future
3 what, what it was all about...
4
5Garry Bernath: Yeah.
6
7Doug Rademacher: ...and, uh, again, thank you, Garry.
8
9Garry Bernath: I applaud you guys...
10
11Marilyn Coulter: Thank you.
12
13Earl Nicholson, Sr.: Thank you, Garry.
14
15Garry Bernath: ...for doing this.
16
17Gary Judy: Thanks a whole lot.
18
19
20/lb