

1 **MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY – SHAWN NICHOLSON**
2 **RANDY THAYER DISCUSSES HIS CAREER IN GENERAL MOTORS AND**
3 **THE FISHER BODY PLANT IN LANSING, MI AS ASSISTANT PLANT MANAGER**
4

5
6 [recorder clicking]
7

8Cheryl McQuaid: This is the Lansing Fisher Body Historical Team. Today is Thursday, June
9 29th. It's approximately [background noises] 10:20. We're at the Lansing
10 Delta Plant...

11
12Female: Visitor's Center. [tapping]
13

14Cheryl McQuaid: ...Visitor's Center. [background noises] Um, first we're gonna introduce
15 the team.
16

17Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith.
18

19Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter.
20

21Doreen Howard: Doreen Howard.
22

23John Fedewa: John Fedewa.
24

25Linda Johnson: Linda Johnson.
26

27Cheryl McQuaid: And I'm Cheryl McQuaid. Um, today we're interviewing Randy Thayer.
28 [0:30] Would you please state your name and spell it for us?
29

30Randy Thayer: [tsk] Randy Thayer – R-A-N-D-Y [papers rustling] T-H-A-Y-E-R.
31

32Cheryl McQuaid: [0:37] And what is your address, sir?
33

34Randy Thayer: [0:39] At work or at home?
35

36Cheryl McQuaid: Home.
37

38Randy Thayer: Home? 10875 Riverside Drive, [papers rustling] Dimondale, Michigan
39 48821.
40

41Cheryl McQuaid: [0:46] And are you married? [background noises] [0:47] Do you have
42 children.
43

44Randy Thayer: Yep. Married 25 years, [thumping] 2 grown daughters, 24 and 22.
45

46Cheryl McQuaid: [0:55] And where were you born and raised?

1
2Randy Thayer: Born in Lansing, um, Sparrow Hospital, [laughter] um, [laughter] to be
3 specific. [laughter] Uh, raised in Lansing. Went to, uh, [zipping] Lansing
4 schools through 10th grade [engine humming] and then went to Leslie my
5 junior and senior year [zipping] and graduated from Leslie High School.
6
7Cheryl McQuaid: [1:14] Uh, were you in the military?
8
9Randy Thayer: No.
10
11Cheryl McQuaid: [1:17] What did your parents do for a living?
12
13Randy Thayer: [tsk] Uh, my dad, uh, worked at local – or worked at Oldsmobile and he
14 was hourly work in Local 652 and he was a dynamometer operator in the
15 engineering labs.
16
17Female: Hm.
18
19Randy Thayer: And my mom was a nurse's aide at Ingham Medical and actually she still
20 is.
21
22Female: Wow.
23
24Randy Thayer: She's retired and they hired her back on contract [clicking] but she worked
25 55 years in Ingham Medical.
26
27Female: Wow.
28
29Cheryl McQuaid: [1:43] What did you do before hiring [clicking] into GM?
30
31Randy Thayer: [tsk] Um, worked on my uncles farm a lot [coughing] through high school,
32 which is how I ended up outta Leslie, was my uncle had a cornpicker
33 accident when I was in high school. So had to move out on the farm and
34 help milk cows my last 2 years a high school and I lived with my parents
35 back in Lansing on the weekends and, [thumping] and that's how I ended
36 up graduating from Leslie. We, we really didn't move. [background
37 noises] I still lived in Lansing. So it was my main high school job was
38 milking 70 holsteins. [clanking]
39
40Female: Wow. [laughter]
41
42Randy Thayer: Twice a day, actually once a day. My cousin would do it in the morning.
43 I'd go to school in the [background noises] morning. I got on co-op and
44 then I'd milk at night, plus I put [tapping] a thousand acres of corn in my
45 junior year, spring of my junior year. So I really haven't had any other
46 jobs. I did work at a gas station for a while in high school too but...

1
2 Cheryl McQuaid: [2:35] And what did you do after high school?
3
4 Randy Thayer: Um, started, [whistling] started working at GM, um, actually it was the
5 day after graduation and, uh, I was already accepted [tapping] to go to
6 GMI in flint, [background noises] [tsk] so I was just – they let us start in
7 the summer and it wasn't really part of our co-op program yet. We were
8 just working in the summer and then [pen clicking] I started school that
9 fall at GMI.
10
11 Cheryl McQuaid: [2:59] So because you were going to GMI is why they allowed you to do
12 the co-op?
13
14 Randy Thayer: Right. Yep. Yep. [background noises]
15
16 Cheryl McQuaid: [3:05] Do you remember what it was like first walking in to the plant for
17 that co-op?
18
19 Randy Thayer: Um, yeah, [background conversation] it was a little scary. I mean I was 17
20 years old so, you know, there was [background noises] very few [tapping]
21 people my age but there were a few, few students around [papers rustling]
22 that summer, so it wasn't, it wasn't that bad. [clanking] Actually, I wasn't
23 – that first summer, I wasn't out in the plant proper. I was in a warehouse
24 over – it was called the old [DuraTherm 3:28] [clanking] warehouse over
25 in the corner of Mount Hope and Washington.
26
27 Female: Hm.
28
29 Randy Thayer: [3:33] Anybody remember where that was, the o-, and it was where we –
30 [tapping] Oldsmobile used to keep all the service parts [tapping] and I was
31 a shipping clerk for that summer.
32
33 Cheryl McQuaid: [3:42] And for those that don't know, what is GMI?
34
35 Randy Thayer: It – well that's not even the current name. Back then [thumping] it was
36 called GMI – [background noises] General [tapping] Motors Institute and
37 it was wholly owned by GM back then. And then, uh, in '84, it got put on
38 its own and its name [tapping] now is called Kettering University and it's a
39 private engineering school in Flint. [background noises] [tsk] And I got
40 my bachelor's in mechanical engineering there. Graduated in '78.
41
42 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:13] And were you given a job with GM...
43
44 Randy Thayer: Yeah. Right.
45
46 Cheryl McQuaid: ...upon graduation or...?

1
2Randy Thayer: Yeah. Yeah. Worked in Manufacturing Engineering. [background noises]
3 That was my first job [clanking] mainly in the motor plants over at the
4 main plant and then, uh, then I got put on the Plant 5 [tapping] Project and
5 helped build Plant 5 and worked about a year, um, on Plant 5. And then in
6 '79, I got sent away to go get my master's on a GM fellowship. [throat
7 clearing] Um, and I went to Georgia Tech in Atlanta, [clanking] went 5
8 terms. Uh, came back and worked the summer in between. Worked in
9 Building 90 that summer and in Material. And then, uh, went back, had 2
10 more terms and I came back to work [thumping] [throat clearing] fulltime
11 again in March of '80. [background noises] And I got a master's in
12 industrial engineering from Georgia Tech. [tapping]
13
14Cheryl McQuaid: [5:04] When did you come in to Fisher Body?
15
16Randy Thayer: [tsk] Uh, it would've been '86. It was, uh – of course the reorg happened
17 in '84, well roughly fall of '84, October of '84 I think and maybe it'd been
18 '85. God, I have to check. I think it was '85 when I transferred from
19 Building 90 [tapping] to C Trim. Rocky Wright and I switched jobs. Um,
20 we all remember Rocky.
21
22Female: Mm-hm.
23
24Randy Thayer: Um...
25
26Cheryl McQuaid: We interviewed him.
27
28Randy Thayer: [5:32] Did ya?
29
30Cheryl McQuaid: Yeah. [throat clearing]
31
32Randy Thayer: Good. Um, yeah, it was back, you know, when [Shodders 5:36] came in,
33 the first thing he started doing was switching a lotta the managers because
34 nobody'd ever worked on the other side. [thumping] And, uh, I was
35 actually on vacation. [background noises] Came back from work and –
36 came back from vacation and Rocky was sitting at my desk and I asked
37 him [laughter] what the hell he was doing there [laughter] [throat clearing]
38 and he said you don't work here anymore.
39
40Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter?
41
42Marilyn Coulter: [5:56] Uh, [clicking] Randy, for those people don't understand, when you
43 say the other side and stuff like that, can you kind of explain to the...
44
45Randy Thayer: Oh, I was just...
46

1 Marilyn Coulter: ...people?
2
3
4 Cheryl McQuaid: ...referring to before '84, [throat clearing] Oldsmobile side ran the Chassis
5 operations [tapping] and Fisher Body [thumping] ran the Body Plant
6 operations. So...
7
8 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
9
10 Randy Thayer: ...that was kind of the [background noises] [tapping] dividing line for
11 management [clanking] people. Nobody transferred back and forth, uh,
12 'cause it was 2 separate divisions. [clanking] [tsk] So that all changed after
13 the reorganization [tapping] and, you know, a lotta people [clanking]
14 swatch-, [thumping] swapped jobs then.
15
16 Marilyn Coulter: Hm.
17
18 Randy Thayer: Um, so that the first time [I went over 6:28] and I was superintendent
19 [background noises] of C Trim for about 3 years and that's when I first
20 met Marilyn.
21
22 Marilyn Coulter: Yeah.
23
24 Randy Thayer: And, uh, and Linda probably.
25
26 Linda Johnson: Mm-hm.
27
28 Randy Thayer: Uh, and then, uh, [coughing] I, uh, [clanking] [tsk] [background noises]
29 transferred outta the plant [tapping] but didn't leave town. They created,
30 uh, a new planning [thumping] group for the N car. And [Terry Cox 6:53]
31 who was the Quality Director at Car Assembly, got named the Director of
32 that group. And then [Terry 6:59] hired me [tapping] to be the
33 manufacturing planner for the division [background noises] and 6 months
34 later, [Terry 7:07] [tapping] got transferred to Detroit and I got [Terry's
35 7:09] job. So that's the first time I made executive, was [tapping] in that
36 planning job. And then 6 months later, I got transferred to Detroit
37 [tapping] in to Engineering [tapping] and I spent 3 years in, uh, Product
38 Engineering. Well it was product and manufacturing both [papers rustling]
39 working – I had the body [tapping] – called Body and [White 7:28] Group,
40 designed the, [tapping] the body structure. [tsk] And one of the projects
41 we were working on at the time was the 92 N and when it got into
42 production, [tapping] in fall a '91, uh, Tom [Police 7:46] [tapping] retired.
43 And I got to come back, [tapping] uh, come back home and I was the
44 assistant plant [clanking] manager then, [tapping] replaced [squeaking]
45 Tom [background noises] and I was the assistant plant manager at that
46 time for 5 years.

1
2 Um, [tapping] and if you remember there was 2 of us – [Gary Malcus
3 8:02] and me. And, uh, Gary [clanking] got put, uh, put on working on the
4 J car [tapping] Project and I became the assistant plant manager for both
5 lines. Up until then, each line had their own [tapping] production manager
6 and then we went to area management and I became the assistant and
7 [Gary 8:18] started working on the J car Project. And then [thumping]
8 January of '96, [tapping] I got transferred to Detroit [background noises]
9 again and I was [pen clicking] in, uh, North American Production Control
10 [tapping] Material Group and, uh, that's actually [thumping] when I got
11 promoted to plant manager level. That job was [tapping] a plant manager
12 level. I had all the material stuff for North America. Spent 18 months in
13 Detroit and got transferred to Atlanta. Spent 5 years at Doraville. Went
14 down summer of '97 [background noises] and came then [tapping] back
15 January of '02 [tapping] to Plant 3 and I was plant manager of Plant 3 for
16 about 18 months [tapping] until Delta started up. So that's the whole story.
17
18 Cheryl McQuaid: I wanna hear a little bit about being the superintendent of C Trim. [9:13]
19 Do you have any favorite [background noises] memories?
20
21 Randy Thayer: Yeah.
22
23 Cheryl McQuaid: [9:16] What was...
24
25 Randy Thayer: Yes.
26
27 Cheryl McQuaid: ...a typica day like?
28
29 Randy Thayer: It was, uh, [background noises] [tsk] it was, uh – there were a fair amount
30 of transitions that happened with people who had traditionally worked
31 with Local 652 and went over to 602. [background noises] There were a
32 fair amount of work rule differences that you had to get acclimated to.
33 [tapping] [background noises] Uh, actually there was a guy, one of – one a
34 my assistant superintendents named [Gary Hansonow 9:39] who [Gary
35 9:41] worked [tapping] at 652 first and actually he transferred over a few
36 months ahead a me. So [Gary 9:48] had figured out a [tapping] lotta the
37 stuff to keep me outta trouble before I ever got there [laughter] but, uh,
38 um, [tsk] C Trim was huge. I mean it was a big department. I can't even
39 remember but it was probably 450 maybe [thumping] 500 people. It was
40 a...
41
42 Female: Hm.
43
44 Randy Thayer: It was a big department. And, uh, the way it was back then, the dayshift
45 [clanking] superintendent, uh, had control of the department in total and
46 then you had a nightshift [tapping] assistant. So you really [clanking] had

1 [clicking] responsibilities for both shifts. [tsk] But it was a big shop. I
2 mean it was a, it was a big department. [tsk] Um, [tapping] but no, there
3 were lots a things to get accustomed to. If you remember back then, the
4 Local Agreement was about this thick. [laughter] [tapping]
5
6 Cheryl McQuaid: [10:30] And that's about an inch and a half two inches? [background
7 noises]
8
9 Randy Thayer: [laughter] Yeah. [laughter] Yeah. It was huge. Uh, I was trying to think
10 [tapping] who – some of the folks that were on committee. Dan Smith
11 [tapping] was on. Uh...
12
13 Marilyn Coulter: [Curly 10:43] Jones.
14
15 Randy Thayer: Huh?
16
17 Marilyn Coulter: [Curly 10:44] Jones.
18
19 Randy Thayer: [Curly 10:45] was the Shop. R.T. was one of my districts. [tapping]
20
21 Female: Mm-hm.
22
23 Randy Thayer: Um, I'm trying to think who else [tapping] was...
24
25 Marilyn Coulter: Jerry Taylor [inaudible 10:55].
26
27 Randy Thayer: [10:57] Was Jerry [clanking] in C Trim? [squeaking]
28
29 Marilyn Coulter: Yeah. 'Cause he was a repairman before he was on...
30
31 Randy Thayer: Yeah. A guy by the name of [Cy Meadows 11:05]...
32
33 Female: [Oh 11:06].
34
35 Randy Thayer: ...was a – he was self-appointed superintendent [rattling] of C Trim. He –
36 [laughter] he r-, he ran the end of the line [tapping] and, uh, [Cy 11:15]
37 was, uh, [clicking] – actually I think he was probably classified as a repair
38 guy but I'm not sure. [thumping] He...
39
40 Female: [Yeah 11:20].
41
42 Cheryl McQuaid: Yeah. He was a repairman.
43
44 Female: Mm-hm. [clanking]
45

1Randy Thayer: But, uh, uh, [tsk] anyway. Yeah. There were a lotta, uh, friends from those
2 days that are still here. [thumping]
3
4Female: Um...
5
6Cheryl McQuaid: Doreen Howard?
7
8Doreen Howard: Um, you've had the opportunity w-, unlike a lot of us [squeaking] to go to
9 a lotta different facilities. [papers rustling] [11:38] Um, what differentiates
10 the people from Fisher Body compared to the other workforces that,
11 [papers rustling] that you had the opportunity to work with. [11:46] What
12 m-, what made us [papers rustling] different?
13
14Randy Thayer: Well the – really the other [rattling] workforce I can compare it to is
15 Atlanta, [tapping] to Doraville, um, 'cause I don't really frankly see any
16 differences between, you know, the folks [clanking] that were at 652 and
17 the [tapping] and the folks that were [zipping] at 602. Um, the work ethic
18 in Lansing was about the same on both sides [clanking] in my opinion.
19 There were differences in how Local Agreements were [thumping]
20 administered but there weren't [background noises] a lotta differences in
21 people's worth ethics and people's backgrounds and, [clicking] you know,
22 you'd meet somebody's brother on 1 side and [tapping] and soembody's
23 sister on the other. So I mean, [clanking] [laughter] uh, other than the
24 1,000 Fedewas, [background conversation] right, John, [there was 12:26]
25 ... [laughter] So [throat clearing] I, I can compare it to Atlanta, um, [tsk]
26 although Atlanta went through some really serious turmoil in that they'd
27 had one shift for a number of years. When I went [tapping] down there, we
28 put second shift on and we proceeded to transfer in 23 [background
29 noises] – 2,300 people from GM plants around [whistling] the country,
30 over a hundred different locals.
31
32Marilyn Coulter: [Oh], [inaudible 12:49].
33
34Randy Thayer: [Well 12:49] it was a, it was a mess. Um, and the base Atlanta Doraville
35 folks had a pretty [background noises] tightknit culture and, uh, and they
36 were a good workforce. [thumping] Um, [rattling] [tsk] but it all but got
37 destroyed by all the factions [tapping] coming in that were all fussing and
38 fighting about [clicking] whatever. And, [thumping] and, uh, [clicking] by
39 the time I left, it was starting to settle down. But it [thumping] never really
40 ever got back to what I was used to. And the funny part of the story is
41 when I left the first time, [tapping] I didn't want to leave and Zubkus told
42 me no, you gotta leave. And I said I don't wanna leave. I'd be happy – I
43 was the assistant [tapping] and I said I'd be happy if I [tapping] retired in
44 this job and he said nah, you gotta leave; you don't know how good you
45 got it.
46

1 'Cause [Zubet 13:35] worked in few other plants and, and I said [clanking]
2 well I don't know about that but I just assume not leave and he said no,
3 you need to leave. So [background noises] [tsk] I mean I was leaving on a
4 promotion and I didn't even wanna leave. [laughter] So h-, he was right.
5 You know? I was used to [clanking] working with friends and relatives
6 and [clicking] knowing lots and lots and lots of people and I walked in to
7 just the opposite down there, [clanking] you know, a plant where I, I
8 basically knew 2 people...
9

10Female: [Oh 14:02].

11

12Randy Thayer: ...in the whole plant. Um, [clicking] so, [clanking] you know,
13 [background noises] it's a whole different feeling where you gotta, you
14 gotta star, uh, you know, figure out who's doing what and who can do
15 what and, and, uh, and then, like I said, all the turmoil [thumping] that was
16 going on at the time. So, [tsk] um, very, very, very [laughter] different,
17 um, culturally and [rattling] everything else. It was, uh – I [inaudible
18 14:27] 'cause everybody used to say well what's so special about Lansing
19 and I always used [background noises] t-, t-, you know, think about I'm
20 not sure I can ever put my finger on it other than Lansing always had more
21 [thumping] than their share of people that, uh, tried to come to work every
22 day and make that place a little better. [knocking]
23

24 And, and I spent some time at Lordstown too though back before I came
25 back to Lansing in '92. I spent some time down there putting their Body
26 Shop in and, uh, that was probably more eye-opening than Doraville,
27 [thumping] that the culture there was very, very much, uh, people fighting
28 and, uh, lots and, eh, lots a strife, uh, people not happy, people not
29 communicating, uh, just, uh, probably a culture that if I even go back to
30 '73 when I hired in, uh, I still [tapping] couldn't recognize it, you know, as
31 far as [tapping] the amount of [background noises] confrontation.
32 [clanking] [tsk] uh, so those are the 2 places that, that I got a reference
33 point from. [clanking]
34

35Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn?

36

37Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter. [15:30] Randy, I'm gonna take you a little bit further
38 back because you said you grew up [throat clearing] in Lansing and your
39 father worked at Oldsmobile. [clinking] [15:37] What was it like for you
40 to grow up in a GM town, have a father that worked? [15:42] Did you
41 know anything – and did you know anything about Fisher Body?
42

43Randy Thayer: Oh, yeah.

44

45Marilyn Coulter: [15:45] And what was it like and did you plan to work there?
46

1Randy Thayer: Um, yeah, actually some time in high school, I knew I wanted to get into
2 engineering and go to [clanking] college. Uh, [throat clearing] [tapping]
3 and my dad did, did go over to Personnel and got all the stuff about GMI
4 for me, so – 'cause he'd heard of it. My dad had a high school education,
5 so he never went to college [clanking] but, [clanking] but he knew what
6 GMI was 'cause he worked in the [clanking] Engineering Lab. So he was
7 working around engineers all day long. And, uh, so he got all the stuff for
8 me and then I applied and, and, uh, got in. But, yeah, I, I mean I,
9 [thumping] I grew up in a very blue collar family and both parents had to
10 work to make, make ends meet. And my brother ended up, uh, h-, my
11 brother and I – by the way, I have 1 brother. [thumping] He's 4 years older
12 than I am. We're very much [tapping] opposites.
13
14 We're – I mean we get along fine but he's an artist and [tapping] and, uh,
15 he got his, uh, degree at Central and then he got his master's degree from
16 [background noises] from the Chicago Institute of Arts and then he tried to
17 teach for about a year and hated it. And I got him hired in to Plant 3
18 [laughter] in '78 [clanking] running, running a press line and, and, uh, he
19 now works down at Milford [thumping] and hope to get out in another 2
20 years. But he's always been a, you know – that job was so he had money
21 [clanking] and his real love is art. [background noises] He's a – he's a –
22 actually, fairly well known artist around town. He's – he does some fairly
23 abstract stuff. But if you ever got to the [clanking] jazz festival or the
24 blues festival, he usually does the poster...
25
26Female: Hm.
27
28Randy Thayer: ...um, for, for especially the blues festival. He's done that the last 5 years.
29 So the t-shirts and all [clanking] all the...
30
31Female: [Inaudible 17:21].
32
33Randy Thayer: ...posters [inaudible 17:22] brother. So he's very much not an engineer.
34 He's – his brain [laughter] is the other half and I got...
35
36Female: [Inaudible 17:29].
37
38Randy Thayer: ...the other half. He, he couldn't fix...
39
40Female: [Inaudible 17:31].
41
42Randy Thayer: ...anything if it broke in front of him. [laughter] And he can't. He can't.
43 He, he – he's the artist. So anyway. [thumping] A kinda uneventful family
44 other than that. I mean we were both always active in sports, both him and
45 I were [tapping] but, but, uh, you know, as far as any other significant
46 events other than the one I told you about with my uncle losing his hand...

1
2Female: [Hm 17:53].
3
4Randy Thayer: ...in the cornpicker accident was pretty, pretty, uh, stressful 'cause, uh,
5 [tapping] I was going to school in Lansing and there wasn't anybody
6 [background noises] to help on the farm. [knocking] My cousin was
7 [background noises] at Michigan State at the time and, uh, so between him
8 and I, like I say, [background noises] I moved out there and got on co-op
9 and went to school from [tapping] 7 to 11 and then come home and milk.
10
11Marilyn Coulter: [18:14] Which high school did you go to?
12
13Randy Thayer: Here?
14
15Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
16
17Randy Thayer: Everett.
18
19Marilyn Coulter: Oh, you went Everett. [clicking]
20
21Randy Thayer: I went to Everett. Okay.
22
23Marilyn Coulter: [18:18] So you didn't...
24
25Randy Thayer: I went t-...
26
27Marilyn Coulter: ...live near?
28
29Randy Thayer: Yeah, I lived on the South Side. I went to, uh, North School until Gardner
30 or until Attwood opened and went to Attwood 5th and 6th grade and then I
31 went to West Junior in 7th and 8th grade and then Gardner [tapping]
32 opened and I went to [tapping] Gardner in 9th grade and then I went to
33 Everett in 10th [background noises] grade.
34
35Marilyn Coulter: Okay. [tapping] So you never were actually near the Fisher Body facility?
36
37Randy Thayer: West Junior was pretty near.
38
39Marilyn Coulter: [18:41] Oh?
40
41Randy Thayer: Yeah. [18:43] You remember where West Junior was? Down [the 18:45]
42 Kalamazoo and Linawee?
43
44Marilyn Coulter: Oh, yeah. [throat clearing] [background noises] [But 18:47] that was
45 downtown – close to downtown.
46

1Randy Thayer: [tsk] If you remember back then – [18:50] W-, weren't you in town then?
2

3Marilyn Coulter: [tsk] I was very little [laughter] at that time.
4

5Randy Thayer: Oh, listen to her. [laughter]
6

7Marilyn Coulter: I was very little when that was [inaudible 18:58].
8

9Randy Thayer: The integration bussing that started [clanking] to happen in Lansing
10 started in the [tapping] 60s. Actually, my brother was the very first, um,
11 integrated, [tapping] uh, student at West Junior.
12

13Marilyn Coulter: [19:10] Really?
14

15Randy Thayer: They bussed everybody south of Jolly Road to West...
16

17Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
18

19Randy Thayer: ...and they bussed everybody [tapping] of State Road on the North Side,
20 Valley Farms area, to West and West was 75 percent black, 25 percent
21 white.
22

23Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
24

25Randy Thayer: And I got bussed, uh, to West in [tapping] in 7th and 8th grade but then
26 they opened up Gardner and closed West up.
27

28Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
29

30Randy Thayer: And then they started bussing, uh, just the opposite the direction.
31

32Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
33

34Randy Thayer: And Gardner though was because they – there was a lotta Walter French
35 people that milled in there. Gardner ended up, [background noises] it was
36 about 50/50 but when everybody was screaming about the busses being
37 burnt in Pontiac, integration had been going on [background noises] in
38 Lansing for probably 7 or 8 years by then.
39

40Marilyn Coulter: [19:55] So when you talk about integration and things like that, being a
41 plant manager and having a – w-, working in Fisher Body, did you feel
42 like it always worked well at Fisher Body as far as people coming...
43

44Randy Thayer: Yeah.
45

46Marilyn Coulter: ...from outlying facilities...

1
2Randy Thayer: Yeah. I...
3
4Marilyn Coulter: ...[inaudible 20:07] areas [and 28:08] working in the plant?
5
6Randy Thayer: I can't ever remember a, a racial issue that I ever encountered at the Body
7 Plant. I can't. Uh, but I, you know, I [tapping] grew up in a, a very
8 intermixed society here in town [background noises] and, uh, I, I still
9 scratch my head here. I can't remember, [background noises] I can't
10 remember an issue that [clanking] ever came up. [The 20:30] guys like
11 [Derek Quinney 20:31]...
12
13Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
14
15Randy Thayer: ...I used to run with...
16
17Marilyn Coulter: Yeah.
18
19Randy Thayer: And Derek was in my same class. [background noises]
20
21Marilyn Coulter: Oh. Wow. Okay.
22
23Randy Thayer: That'll tell you something. No? [laughter]
24
25Marilyn Coulter: Interesting class. But and that's one of the [throat clearing] things because
26 people for the most part of Fisher Body [thumping] [throat clearing]
27 always seemed to get along.
28
29Randy Thayer: Yeah.
30
31Marilyn Coulter: That's one of the reasons why...
32
33Randy Thayer: Yeah.
34
35Marilyn Coulter: ...the [workforce 20:45] is so well.
36
37Randy Thayer: Yeah. Yeah. [tapping]
38
39Cheryl McQuaid: Linda Johnson?
40
41Linda Johnson: Randy, [clanking] you – your, uh, background farming for your uncle,
42 [thumping] that took a lot of, um, [tapping] – that was very adult for...
43
44Female: Mm-hm.
45

1 Linda Johnson: ...for you to do at that age. [21:01] You – did you have to give up your
2 football playing...
3
4 Randy Thayer: No. No. I actually...
5
6 Linda Johnson: ...to do all that?
7
8 Randy Thayer: ...played, played football, uh, my junior year. And my senior year,
9 [background noises] uh, I didn't play but not because of the work.
10
11 Linda Johnson: Mm-hm.
12
13 Randy Thayer: Uh, it's because I thought the coach was very demeaning [background
14 noises] and I didn't like the guy and I wasn't gonna play for him. I
15 wrestled too my junior [knocking] year and I wrestled my senior [tapping]
16 year up until Christmas and I loved the wrestling coach. [tapping]
17
18 Linda Johnson: Mm-hm.
19
20 Randy Thayer: Um, I loved wrestling actually more than football but, eh, I wrestled 155
21 my junior year up until Christmas and then I got down [background
22 noises] to 145 believe it or not [laughter] and, um, [tapping] I actually – I
23 had a very good a-, I was 32 and 8 my junior year, [tapping] so I had a...
24
25 Female: Oh.
26
27 Randy Thayer: ...pretty good record. Um, my senior year, I got – I started out the same
28 thing, 155 again and [thumping] I got to Christmas and I just couldn't get
29 down and I was getting – I had like a 50/50 record and I knew I was going
30 to college that didn't have a wrestling [thumping] team or anything...
31
32 Female: Mm-hm.
33
34 Randy Thayer: ...so I was just frankly tired of starving.
35
36 Female: Mm-hm.
37
38 Randy Thayer: And it was the first thing I'd ever quit in my life, [laughter] was – but I
39 did. I quit...
40
41 Female: Mm-hm.
42
43 Randy Thayer: ...at Christmastime [background noises] of my senior year.
44
45 Female: Mm-hm.
46

1Randy Thayer: I was just starving to death trying to get down to 145, which actually goes
2 at Christmas – it went from 145 [tapping] to 148...
3
4Female: Mm-hm.
5
6Randy Thayer: ...but that still [clanking] wasn't enough. So I, uh – like I say, I was just
7 tired of starving myself and any of you who ever had kids that were
8 wrestlers, you know what I mean. It's, it's – it really is the most grueling
9 sport there is. It's a team sport but it's a very individual sport too. So...
10
11Cheryl McQuaid: Doreen Howard?
12
13Doreen Howard: [22:43] Randy, um, eh, going back to some of your, uh, past experiences
14 with all the hard work that you had to do as, as a kid and, um, how does
15 that transfer your work ethic to today?
16
17Randy Thayer: Yeah. Well I don't know. My work ethic, I think, s-, was more for my dad
18 than the farm. I mean I worked hard on the farm too but I used to work out
19 there every summer even before that incident happened. [background
20 noises] But my dad, um, [tsk] – I don't ever remember him missing day of
21 work all the time I grew up. Um, [throat clearing] he just never missed a
22 day of work and he might take a week a year for vacation where we'd go
23 somewhere but he just never missed a day of work. And, and matter of
24 fact, I can remember, [tapping] uh, during the strike of, uh – what was it
25 '69, '67? [tapping] [23:33] When was the big strike in town?
26
27John Fedewa: ['71 23:35].
28
29Randy Thayer: '70?
30
31John Fedewa: Mm-hm.
32
33Randy Thayer: '69 [inaudible 23:37] late '60 [into 23:37] '70. Um, [tsk] I can remember
34 my dad ended up getting a second job driving a pizza delivery [clanking]
35 truck, not delivering to houses but he was working for Sir Pizza delivering
36 supplies to the stores [background noises] and he kept doing that even
37 after the strike was over for a few months trying to get some money put
38 back in the, back in the bank. So I mean, I'm [tapping] just – and my mom
39 always worked too. [engine humming] So, you know, I just – that's
40 probably more where I got [laughter] my work ethic than it was on the
41 farm. But make no mistake, those 2 years in high school were [background
42 noises] a lotta work. I mean I'd get up and go to school, come home
43 [phone ringing] and work in the fields all afternoon, milk at 4:00, usually
44 get back on the tractor and [tapping] – in the spring anyway and plow and
45 plant till, till the sun went down. So...
46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: [24:29] What was it like being raised by a man that worked at GM?
2 [24:34] Was life good? [24:36] Was he...
3
4 Randy Thayer: Yeah.
5
6 Cheryl McQuaid: ...home much?
7
8 Randy Thayer: I actually...
9
10 Cheryl McQuaid: [24:38] And what plant did he work in?
11
12 Randy Thayer: He worked [clanking] for engineering in Building 66 [background noises]
13 at the main plant. [throat clearing] Actually, he worked midnights
14 [clicking] almost all the time I was growing up, so it was like he didn't
15 have a job. Um, [laughter] I knew he went to work every day, like I said
16 before, but [background noises] he worked, uh, midnight to 8. So in the
17 morning [tapping] when we were getting up to go to school, he was
18 getting home from work. [tapping] Usually see'm, you know, [clanking]
19 passing in the morning but then he'd sleep all day and when we came
20 home from [tapping] school he'd get up [tapping] and he'd spend all
21 evening. [tapping] Um, I can always remember he hardly ever missed a
22 sporting event. [tapping]
23
24 Female: That's good.
25
26 Randy Thayer: A-, 'cause he had, he had his evenings [tapping] and then he'd usually
27 [tapping] when we'd go to bed, he'd usually [tapping] lay down for a half
28 hour or an hour and take a little nap and then he'd get up at 11:00 and go
29 to work. So it was, like I say, [throat clearing] almost like he didn't have a
30 job. [laughter]
31
32 Marilyn Coulter: That w-, musta been nice. [tapping]
33
34 Randy Thayer: It is. Actually midnights, if you can, if you can deal with the weekends,
35 uh, midnights was perfect shift to have a family but the weekends always
36 tore him up...
37
38 Female: Mm-hm.
39
40 Randy Thayer: ...'cause, you know, you gotta t-, he'd always try and switch back and get
41 all screwed up but...
42
43 Female: Mm-hm.
44
45 Randy Thayer: ...but, [tapping] but, uh, [clanking] so no. Family-wise it was, it was fine.
46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: Doreen Howard?
2
3 Doreen Howard: [25:55] Uh, how do you deal with your personal life here with the amount
4 of hours and the work that you do now?
5
6 Randy Thayer: Uh, well I put a lotta hours in. No question about that. But the kids are,
7 kids are all gone and I try and when I'm outta here try and relax and, uh, at
8 least so far, we haven't gotten into the weekends yet. I'm sure that's
9 coming but, [papers rustling] um, you know, back when the kids were
10 little, it was actually tougher. [throat clearing] Eh, '84 when we did the N
11 car startup was probably one of the worst startups we'd ever had. And I
12 can remember, [tapping] I think I worked, uh, 8 or 10 weeks in a row
13 without a day off. I mean, it's just [tapping] craziness that we were going
14 through back then [tapping] but – so I've done [stretching 26:39] [throat
15 clearing] – I've done stretches like [thumping] that through launch when I
16 was younger.
17
18 I don't think I could even do it now. But, [laughter] but, uh, I'm generally
19 13 hours a day now, um, so it just [tapping] – like I say, when I get home
20 during the week – plus I'm involved in lotta other – unfortunately, when
21 you get into [clanking] busy times like this and a lotta the civic activity
22 stuff that I hafta do and – [tapping] I don't have to – I want to do too but it
23 takes up time too. I think there was, uh, 2 nights this week. Um, last week
24 was actually [tapping] a good week, 1 night. The week before that,
25 [coughing] was 3 nights. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, I had
26 something every night.
27
28 Doreen Howard: [27:20] Could you elaborate on some of the activities that you are...
29
30 Randy Thayer: Just board...
31
32 Doreen Howard: ...[inaudible 27:23]?
33
34 Randy Thayer: ...board meetings. I – [tapping] I'm on the United Way Board. I'm on
35 Highfields' [tapping] Board. I'm on Peckham's Board. Um...
36
37 John Fedewa: That was a good night though.
38
39 Randy Thayer: Huh?
40
41 John Fedewa: United Way was a good night.
42
43 Randy Thayer: The, uh...
44
45 Female: [27:35] When you did the van?
46

1Randy Thayer: Huh?
2
3Female: [27:38] When you did the van for the United Way?
4
5Randy Thayer: That wasn't at night. That was during the day. [laughter]
6
7John Fedewa: That was during the day.
8
9Randy Thayer: That was during the day.
10
11John Fedewa: But at night, we had a fun meeting.
12
13Randy Thayer: Yeah. That was...
14
15Female: [Wow 27:46].
16
17Randy Thayer: ...during the day. Um, [tsk] um, Chamber of Commerce, which generally
18 isn't a lotta night events or meetings. They're [tapping] generally during
19 the day.
20
21Female: Mm-hm.
22
23Randy Thayer: And, of course, [this 27:57] spring, y-, you know, being on Highfields'
24 board, which generally would be 3 or 4 hours [tapping] a month maybe,
25 um, turned into February and March being about 20 or 30 hours a month...
26
27Female: [Inaudible 28:09].
28
29Female: Mm-hm.
30
31Randy Thayer: ...um, 'cause I am on the Executive Committee at Highfields too.
32 [clanking] So if you read, you know – I don't know [you 28:16] get into
33 that but it was just a huge mess and spent lots [clanking] and lots a hours
34 in meetings trying to figure out which direction we were gonna go. So that
35 was one that was completely unplanned. [background noises]
36
37Female: [Inaudible 28:28].
38
39Randy Thayer: So anyway, you put it all together and I try and enjoy my weekends is the
40 bottom line.
41
42Female: Do you have personal hobbies?
43
44Randy Thayer: Yeah. I've got a Harley that I love to ride, um, and I [tapping] u-, usually
45 about half of my vacation time, [throat clearing] I do [wife 28:42] trips
46 without the wife and the other half of the vacation time, [Cindy 28:47] and

1 I do something together. We went to Hawaii on our 25th wedding
2 anniversary in February [clanking] for 10 days, uh, had a nice, nice
3 vacation there and, uh, then, [tapping] I guess about 3 weeks ago, the 6 of
4 us – 6 guys went to Myrtle Beach on our Harleys. So I try and split
5 [clanking] the vacation time up. [tsk] And [Cindy 29:07] takes vacations
6 and goes and sees, sees friends on her own too. So...
7
8Female: Hm.
9
10Randy Thayer: ...um, got a cottage up North. [background conversation] Don't get up
11 there enough but that's where I'll go for the 2 weeks. [clanking] And I've
12 got an old '66 Toronado that I like to work on. [tsk] Um, I like to,
13 [tapping] like to ski and I got a couple a snowmobiles, couple a Jet Skis.
14 They're mainly for the kids. I don't ride'm as much as I used to but I, I do
15 snowmobile or try to. Last winter wasn't great for [background noises]
16 snowmobiling either. [clanking] January, there wasn't enough snow. In
17 February, [banging] I got busy with the Highfield stuff, so. [tsk] [That's
18 29:49] pretty much all my hobbies.
19
20Cheryl McQuaid: [29:51] What year was it that you were the assistant plant manager...
21
22Randy Thayer: Um...
23
24Cheryl McQuaid: ...at Fisher?
25
26Randy Thayer: ...'92 through '96.
27
28Cheryl McQuaid: [29:59] What was it like being the assistant plant manager? [30:01] Were
29 you on second shift?
30
31Randy Thayer: No. No. I was on days. It was, uh, [background noises] – had all the
32 production operations. It was like the old [banging] production manager's
33 job except I had both [background noises] lines. No, those were, those
34 were actually very, very good years. Um, eh, both lines were [tapping]
35 were running full. We were also working on bringing the J car in and
36 that's what, that's what [Malcus 30:20] was working on. [coughing]
37 Zubkus was great to work for. He let me run the production operation and,
38 [tsk] and, uh, uh, had good area managers back then. Uh, Ken Moore was
39 here. [papers rustling] Randy [Waller 30:33] was here, Tim [Earl 30:35]
40 and – I'm trying to think. We had 4 area managers 'cause we had w-, one
41 at Chassis. I was trying to think who was at Chassis at the time. I guess
42 [background noises] Ron Davis probably. Ron Davis was still here then.
43 [background noises] So [zipping] had good area managers. Uh, actually
44 things ran, ran quite well [inaudible 30:54].
45

1 Cheryl McQuaid: [30:54] For being an old building or what were some of the problems with
2 having an old building to manage? [throat clearing]
3

4 Randy Thayer: I don't know that there was any issues related to old building. Um, you
5 know, we had our – [tapping] we had our [tapping] struggles with, you
6 know, Paint. We always tried [clanking] [banging] – we always had to
7 Band-Aid Paint back together 'cause Paint [background noises] needed to
8 be replaced years to – years ago. [tapping] But, uh, um, [tsk] you know, I
9 – there was only 1 – I can only remember 1 [tapping] – I can remember
10 lots a breakdowns but I can only remember 1 major incident when we got
11 into craters, uh, that was very stressful. I mean we went 2 weeks trying
12 to...
13

14 Cheryl McQuaid: [31:31] And craters is a paint...? [whistling]
15

16 Randy Thayer: Paint defect. [31:35] Anybody else remember that?
17

18 Female: Mm-hm.
19

20 Randy Thayer: [But 31:36] it was 2 days before Thanksgiving, had to have been about '94
21 but – and that afternoon we had a, um, huge thunderstorm that rolled
22 through town [background noises] with about 50 mile an hour winds.
23 [clanking] It tore off about 30 feet of, of oven wall up on the roof.
24

25 Female: Oh. [clanking]
26

27 Randy Thayer: We had just changed clearcoat formulations from DuPont. We had
28 brought in a few new people into the Paint Shop. So we had all these
29 variables that had changed and – oh, and we had an air – [clanking] I
30 forgot – 'cause it ended up being the actual cause. We had an air
31 compressor [tapping] go down in the powerhouse and Dennis [Story
32 32:16] who [clanking] had replaced Leonard as the plant engineer, Dennis
33 had brought in a rental air compressor and all those things had changed
34 and within about 2 hours, we were completely shut down with paint
35 [thumping] defects and, um, we problem solved for – we didn't run for 2
36 days before Thanksgiving. We worked everybody all through
37 Thanksgiving [background noises] trying to figure out what it was that had
38 [thumping] gone on. And we had – by the – I think it was Saturday, maybe
39 Friday night of Thanksgiving weekend, we had figured out it was in the
40 air, in the air supply from the [background noises] compressor.
41

42 Female: [Inaudible 32:52].
43

44 Randy Thayer: And we had to go get permits [tapping] from the city to blow off the air
45 supply and we – the guys built a 6-inch stack to come off the back of the
46 Paint Shop, the furthest away we could get from the powerhouse –

1 [tapping] a 6-inch stack and we got a permit from the city to blow it off on
2 Sunday. They wouldn't let us start before 10:00 but at 10:00 we cut this
3 stack on and you could hear it from probably Saint John's. I mean it was
4 [laughter] that loud. That was the only way – e-, everybody who was
5 familiar with the problem said the only way you'll ever get whatever it – it
6 was silicone that was in the seals of the pump compressor...
7
8 Female: Oh.
9
10 Randy Thayer: ...got into all that black pipe [clicking] in the Paint Shop. It was [throat
11 clearing] black pipe, [banging] old, black, rusty pipe for the airlines. And
12 they said the only way you'll ever get it out [thumping] is just do blowoffs.
13
14 Female: Hm.
15
16 Randy Thayer: So they let us run it until 10:00 Sunday night [sighing] and Monday we
17 tried to run again and it was a disaster [tapping], so we turned the blowoff
18 back on [tapping] again and blew it off for – I don't know – another 2
19 [tapping] days, maybe 3 days [clanking] and Thursday, [clanking] I think
20 it was, we tried again to run and were able to salvage some jobs and
21 [thumping] it was pretty stressful. I was getting a lotta help from
22 downtown, from Detroit. [laughter] [tapping] About w-, I mean, we had
23 120 an hour a plant shut [tapping] down. It was, uh – and, and it turned
24 out, [background noises] as I mentioned, it was this [papers rustling]
25 compressor we'd rented that had silicone in the oil of the compressor...
26
27 Female: Hm.
28
29 Randy Thayer: ...[tsk] and it filled the whole Paint Shop air supply system with...
30
31 Female: Wow.
32
33 Randy Thayer: ...silicone. We put new filters in. We, [clanking] we did everything. We
34 changed every pipe in there.
35
36 Cheryl McQuaid: It sounds like that was a really, um, [coughing] [inaudible 34:41] that had
37 to go in.
38
39 Randy Thayer: Oh, yeah. [laughter]
40
41 Cheryl McQuaid: [34:43] What about the neighbors?
42
43 Randy Thayer: That's why we had [clanking] to go get the permit from the city and, of
44 course, we got some press about what was going on and why it was going
45 on but we didn't [background noises] get any real negative reaction. Like I

1 say, we only ran it from 10 in the morning till 10 at night but [inaudible
2 35:00]. [thumping]
3

4Doreen Howard: Uh, Doreen Howard. [clanking] Um, a lotta the people like myself,
5 [clanking] um, felt that the Fisher Body plant, uh, was their home away
6 from home. Um, it's very nostalgic to many people. [35:16] Um, what's,
7 what's your feelings toward the facility now that it's, [you know 35:20],
8 you worked there? [35:21] How do you feel now that it's no longer there?
9

10Randy Thayer: Well I had a-, I had attachment to both s-, [clanking] both sides of town –
11 the Oldsmobile side too and [thumping] actually the building that I first
12 worked in [tapping] was tore down when Grand River was built. So I went
13 through a little bit of that and I was actually living in Atlanta but
14 [clanking] [Kenny 35:38] Moore was still here and Ken [tapping] went
15 over and got me a brick when they tore down the old Building 40 over
16 there. So...
17

18Female: Mm-hm.
19

20Randy Thayer: ...I've gone through this twice [laughter] already. Um, [papers rustling]
21 and the Body Plant, of course, had tons and tons a historical significance
22 too, uh, of course, [clanking] being a [inaudible 35:55] plant to begin with
23 and then, then being the, being the body plant. But it's different though if
24 you- you've ever been at a place where they really announced it being
25 closed and I did leave that – I, I did work out at [Leeds 36:09] after we
26 closed it and was trying [tapping] to sell it to Isuzu and just associating
27 [tapping] with the people that really didn't have a place to go, that's
28 different than what we [clanking] went through. [tapping] 'Cause I'd
29 categorized the M system [tapping] buildout that day as almost a
30 celebration [tapping] that we're ending one era and maybe starting another
31 and, you know, that's not your normal plant closing. [coughing] People
32 ask me that and isn't it really sad, [coughing] other people that weren't
33 there and I said actually it wasn't very sad at all. [clanking] I mean it was
34 some sadness around the memories of the pl-, you know. But it wasn't sad
35 in that...
36

37Marilyn Coulter: It was a [tapping] bitter sweet.
38

39Randy Thayer: Yeah. It wasn't that, [tapping] you know, we lost the plant. We – we're
40 getting it replaced. [tapping] So, uh, you know, I've got lots a good
41 memories from, from both places but the, the, the closing in the last, the
42 last, uh, [clanking] buildout in the M system and I, I didn't [clanking] –
43 you know, [tapping] other than doing a little reminiscing, I didn't think it
44 was all that sad of an, of an event at all, although Rosendahl brought fow-,
45 flowers [tapping] like it was a funeral. [laughter] I don't know what he
46 was thinking then. He drove up here [coughing] and unloaded all his damn

1 flowers. I thought what the hell. [We got 37:19] Palmer Bush here or
2 something. [laughter]
3
4 Cheryl McQuaid: Jerri Smith? [thumping]
5
6 Jerri Smith: Yes. I was – you were talking about the J car and the N car. [37:28] For
7 people that are not familiar [clanking] with those like a lot of us are, what
8 exactly was the J car and what was the N car?
9
10 Randy Thayer: The...
11
12 Jerri Smith: [37:36] The make of the car?
13
14 Randy Thayer: Back – yeah. The N cars were what we switched to [clanking] in '84 and it
15 was the, the – actually the original [tapping] Oldsmobile was called the –
16 an Achieva – no, a Calais.
17
18 Female: Calais.
19
20 Randy Thayer: The original was Calais. [clanking] The second one was Achieva. And we
21 had a Buick [tapping] Skylark. Actually the original one was a [clanking]
22 Buick...
23
24 Female: [Inaudible 37:54].
25
26 Randy Thayer: ...Somerset. [laughter]
27
28 Female: Mm-hm. [laughter]
29
30 Randy Thayer: And, of course, [tapping] the GrandAm. Those were [background noises]
31 the 3 N cars. And then the J car was the Cavalier. [clanking] [background
32 noises] And we also built, um, the Sunfire though when we built
33 convertibles.
34
35 Female: Mm-hm.
36
37 Randy Thayer: And it was the J car. And then [clanking] after that [background noises]
38 the Malibu came in, which was also based off the N car. So – and it was
39 classified as a N car.
40
41 Jerri Smith: Okay. Thank you.
42
43 Cheryl McQuaid: I was hoping you'd share another memory with us in the Paint Department
44 and that was you had a photographer up there that, um...
45
46 Randy Thayer: Set all the fire...

1
2Cheryl McQuaid: Yeah.
3
4Randy Thayer: ...alarms off.
5
6Cheryl McQuaid: [38:34] Could you tell us about that.
7
8Randy Thayer: That happened more than once.
9
10Cheryl McQuaid: [38:37] Did it?
11
12Randy Thayer: Oh, yeah. Not by you.
13
14Female: Oh.
15
16Randy Thayer: I think you only did, [laughter] you only did it once. But it happened more
17 than once where somebody flashed and set all the fire, uh, [beeping] all
18 the fire, uh, deluge systems off, which dumps the water into the booth and
19 [tapping] – but actually the worst part a all tho-, all those stories weren't
20 those false alarms. We actually had 4 or 5 fires over a couple a year time
21 in Paint Shop.
22
23Female: Yeah.
24
25Randy Thayer: Um, we had some thinner fires and had a fire in the oven one time. I
26 remember that...
27
28Female: [Hm 39:07].
29
30Randy Thayer: ...got going on a Sunday. I thought this is not good. It was...
31
32Female: Mm-hm.
33
34Randy Thayer: ...I came in and they were having a heck of a time getting it out. They'd
35 tore a lotta oven wall off. [background noises] It was over on the far
36 corner by the shipping [tapping] building.
37
38Female: Mm-hm.
39
40Randy Thayer: And the city was in and they were cutting ovens up like [laughter] no
41 tomorrow. So anyway but the, the scarry part of LCA's Paint Shop was we
42 did have fires and, you know, how buried it was [background noises] back
43 in there. If you really had [background noises] something that got going,
44 there wasn't any way you were gonna get much equipment to it. [throat
45 clearing] [coughing] So but yes.
46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: I remember when I worked up in [17-2 39:41], I was all by myself
2 [clanking] and the guy that broke me in on the job said if you see a lotta
3 people from the Paint Department coming this way fast... [clanking]
4

5 Randy Thayer: Follow'm.
6

7 Cheryl McQuaid: ...follow them. [laughter] Don't ask any questions, just get in...
8

9 Randy Thayer: Yeah.
10

11 Cheryl McQuaid: ...the line. [laughter] Go with'm 'cause there could be ...
12

13 Randy Thayer: Yeah.
14

15 Female: Mm-hm.
16

17 Cheryl McQuaid: ...a fire.
18

19 Randy Thayer: Yep. Yeah, that was probably the scariest part, was the number of fires we
20 had. But yeah, we did also [tapping] have a couple of flash deluges.
21 [background noises] I didn't remember.
22

23 Cheryl McQuaid: [40:07] Did you ever see anybody...
24

25 Randy Thayer: [40:08] You actually were one of those?
26

27 Jerri Smith: [God 40:10], Jim told me – I saw Jim right after that the next couple a
28 days and I saw him and I thought he's gonna say something. He says well
29 Randy wanted to fire ya but I told him you didn't know what...
30

31 Randy Thayer: No. He didn't. [background noises] [laughter] I can just hear him saying
32 that but I probably didn't but, [laughter] [background noises] um. Yeah,
33 [tapping] that happened [coughing] at least twice though that I know of,
34 [background noises] 2 different people that obviously neither one knew
35 that [tapping] – if you were one, you know you didn't know what it would
36 do [thumping] but. [tapping] What else?
37

38 Jerri Smith: [40:41] Explain it.
39

40 Linda Johnson: [40:42] Explain what?
41

42 Jerri Smith: [40:43] What happened.
43

44 Linda Johnson: Oh, I...
45

1Randy Thayer: Well the fire detection system is always looking for spark. Okay?
2 [background noises] And when you take a picture with a flash – you can
3 take pictures but just not with a flash. [tapping] So if you took a picture
4 with a flash, the fire detection system thought there was a fire. [tsk] And it
5 immediately opens up all the water da-, it's called a deluge system
6 [thumping] that essentially floods the booth is what...
7

8Female: Hm.
9

10Randy Thayer: ...it does. [background noises] It dumps so much water [background
11 noises] [thumping] so fast that if you don't get outta there, you're gonna
12 swim out. That's how much water. And it brings all the filter tiles down
13 [clanking] at the same time [laughter] and it's about a 6-hour [tapping]
14 cleanup...
15

16Female: Yeah, the...
17

18Randy Thayer: ...before you can...
19

20Female: ...skilled trades guys told me I was...
21

22Randy Thayer: ...before you can run again. [laughter]
23

24Female: ...job protection.
25

26Randy Thayer: Yeah. [laughter] Yeah. It's, it's ugly.
27

28Cheryl McQuaid: [41:29] So that shuts [tapping] the, the line...
29

30Randy Thayer: Oh, yeah.
31

32Cheryl McQuaid: ...right down?
33

34Randy Thayer: We were down 5-6 hours. Yeah. [laughter]
35

36Marilyn Coulter: So, Randy, that was an exciting moment for you.
37

38Female: [Inaudible 41:37].
39

40Marilyn Coulter: [41:38] Were there any other...
41

42Female: [Inaudible 41:39].
43

44Marilyn Coulter: ...what you would consider really happy moments for you or sad moments
45 over at Lansing [inaudible 41:44]?
46

1Randy Thayer: Hm. I don't know there were any sad moments other than [thumping] the
2 normal, [background noises] normal breakdowns stuff. But no, those were
3 – those 5 years were good times. Uh, Zub was, Zub was great to work for.
4 Uh, you know, eh, it was, uh, eh – I don't really recall any, any huge
5 issues that everyone on the – that were, you know, [clicking] scandalous
6 or anything like that. [laughter] You know?
7

8Marilyn Coulter: [Yeah 41:10]. [42:10] N-, d-, just exciting like [laughter] with the fires,
9 right?
10

11Randy Thayer: Yeah.
12

13Marilyn Coulter: [42:13] So did you find that you found, um – [papers rustling] 'cause I
14 know that you ride n-, and I know that you ride with some of your
15 [background noises] coworkers, right, so were you able to develop some
16 lasting friendships from the – working at Lansing Car Assembly?
17

18Randy Thayer: Oh, yeah. Uh, of course, you know, Ken Moore and I – Ken went to
19 Lansing schools too. He went to West Junior also, so...
20

21Female: [Yeah 42:34].
22

23Randy Thayer: ...Ken Moore and I have been friends since 6th grade...
24

25Marilyn Coulter: [Wow 42:38].
26

27Randy Thayer: ...and he was a year behind me at GMI and then we [tapping] ended up
28 working together. Uh, Randy [Waller 42:44] was in my class at GMI but I
29 didn't know him before college, so [background noises] Randy and I were
30 [tapping] friends in college and then, eh, then ended up – actually Randy
31 [Waller 42:53] over the – over my career has worked for me 3 different
32 times, [background noises] so.
33

34Marilyn Coulter: [42:57] Really? [thumping]
35

36Randy Thayer: Yeah. Um, but – so – and, and I knew Tim pretty well. [background
37 noises] Um, and I knew Ron pretty well. Actually, uh, uh, the first time I
38 started working [tapping] with the Body Plant [clanking] was back though
39 – I was in a planning group early on before we ever got the N car project.
40

41Female: [Inaudible 43:15].
42

43Randy Thayer: And I was doing a planning job for Oldsmobile [tapping] and Herb [Mattis
44 43:19] [tapping] was the planner [tapping] at [tapping] Fisher and
45 [Chenoweth 43:23] was the plant manager. [tsk] and Herb and I put
46 together [background noises] the project to sell the conversion from rear

1 wheel drive to front wheel drive for [background noises] Lansing. And
2 [background noises] we worked on that together and [thumping] then
3 when we went downtown for all the presentations, there was a Fisher
4 Body presentation [thumping] and there was an Oldsmobile [thumping]
5 presentation 'cause this was before '84. But that was my first real get to
6 know of [background noises] what all went on inside of the Body Plant
7 and was – that would've had to have been '82, um, that I was doing that.
8 So got to know Herb pretty well [background noises] then. Uh, got to
9 know [tapping] Ron Davis pretty well. [clanking] Got to know [Lynn
10 Malen 44:03] [tapping] pretty well, uh, [Buck Master 44:05] of course.
11 Dick was there then. Um, [Chenoweth 44:10] was the plant manager.
12 [coughing]
13
14 I'll never forget if you remember [Chenoweth 44:15], you know,
15 [clanking] he was really into his arts and charts and, and, uh, [papers
16 rustling] everything had to be, you know, 3 color and [tapping] ribbons
17 hanging and [background noises] oh, he was [tapping] into these [tapping]
18 fancy presentations, so Herb and I would [thumping] show up down to the
19 same meetings to do our [2 half 44:30] and I'd have black-and-white
20 [background noises] flimsies [papers rustling] [laughter] and Herb would
21 get out movie cameras and all kinds a [background noises] color
22 photography stuff that he – [background noises] it was, it was day and
23 night. [background noises] Seriously, it – 'cause [Chenoweth 44:43]
24 always was – [tapping] you know that.
25
26 Marilyn Coulter: Yeah, I remember that.
27
28 Randy Thayer: He, he was always [thumping] into that kinda stuff and, uh, so that was my
29 first association [background noises] really with the Body Plant. I forgot
30 about that, that I, uh, in the early planning days before we ever switched to
31 N car, um, we worked on that together.
32
33 Jerri Smith: That was very significant for Lansing. [thumping]
34
35 Randy Thayer: [tsk] It was huge. Matter a fact, uh, the rear wheel drives were all going
36 away and everybody knew that. [clicking] And the first project we worked
37 on together – and I'm glad we didn't get it – was to do dual – [tapping] 2 F
38 car [background noises] plants in Lansing to build Camaros and Firebirds.
39 [clanking] [background noises] If you remember back then, um, [tapping]
40 Southgate or – excuse me – Van Nuys in California...
41
42 Female: Mm-hm.
43
44 Randy Thayer: ...and Norwood, Ohio, build Camaros and firewor-, Firebirds. There were
45 2 plants [tapping] running F cars and they were getting ready to do the

1 new Camero Firebird and we studied doing Camero and Firebird in
2 Lansing on both lines.
3
4Female: Hm. [background noises]
5
6Randy Thayer: And as it turned out, we were down – [tapping] after that conversion, we
7 were down to 1 plant on F cars [laughter] and, and [clanking] then
8 [Inaudible 45:46] ended up [tapping] up being the [background noises] last
9 one [and then 45:48] the car, the car died. So we would not, eh, eh, if we
10 woulda ended up getting [tapping] assigned that project, [knocking] we
11 probably wouldn't all be sitting here today.
12
13Female: Hm.
14
15Randy Thayer: We wouldn't a had near the last 20 years that we had [tapping]. But luckily
16 that didn't, that didn't go and then, uh, then we started working on the N
17 car project to switch both plants [background noises] to N cars.
18
19Marilyn Coulter: [46:09] Randy, when you were working in the Fisher Body plant, [throat
20 clearing] was there anything about the plant or the employees that
21 surprised you? [tapping]
22
23Randy Thayer: Uh, there was 1 thing [background noises] and that was the salary
24 cafeteria, the [throat clearing] executive cafeteria.
25
26Marilyn Coulter: [46:24] Can you tell us...
27
28Randy Thayer: Where...
29
30Marilyn Coulter: ...a little bit about that?
31
32Randy Thayer: Where we t-, well [tapping] it e-, [throat clearing] it existed and on the
33 [thumping] Oldsmobile side, there was no such [tapping] thing. Um,
34 [tapping] never was, [tapping] um, that I know of anyway. [thumping]
35 Never was any anytime that I – in my career. [tapping] So that was the
36 first time. And actually I got exposed to it when I was working with Herb
37 on that project [background noises] and came over for a meeting. Herb
38 says come on, I'll buy ya lunch and we go in [background noises] private
39 dining room, [thumping] real china, [laughter] real silverware [laughter]
40 and the whole thing. And I said well what's up with this. And he s-, what
41 do ya mean. Th-, and he didn't know [tapping] the opposite. Okay? He
42 didn't know any better the other direction.
43
44 And I hadn't been in [throat clearing] other plant, so – but I did find out
45 there was probably as many plants that had – still had those kinds of
46 setups as didn't, like Kalamazoo had one. [thumping] Um, [tsk]

1 [background noises] but anyway Oldsmobile side never had such a – and
2 I, I was kinda surprised. I thought it was [tapping] actually, you know,
3 wasn't good. I mean – and [background noises] it, it, uh, [tsk] [tapping] I
4 was trying to think. It wasn't very long after [Shodders 47:31] got here. It
5 couldn't have been a month, I bet, and he closed it up. It was one of the
6 first things Frank did. Um, he just locked the door and said that's gone.
7 [laughter] [background noises] And, and it shoulda been gone a long time
8 [thumping] time ago. It was, it was just, uh, propagating a, [background
9 noises] you know, a class system that...

10

11Female: Mm-hm.

12

13Randy Thayer: ...that, uh, [throat clearing] just didn't have any – in my opinion – didn't
14 have any, [tapping] uh, usefulness at all. [47:58] And matter a fact, didn't
15 they used to have a – [tapping] an executive [banging] cafeteria that
16 certain levels could eat at and then they another one...

17

18Female: A supervisor...

19

20Randy Thayer: ...that 7th [thumping] levels could eat at?

21

22Female: Mm-hm.

23

24Female: Mm-hm.

25

26Randy Thayer: And it just blew my mind. I...

27

28Marilyn Coulter: And parking too. [coughing]

29

30Randy Thayer: [48:12] And parking too?

31

32Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. They had their own parking.

33

34Female: [Yes 48:14].

35

36Randy Thayer: Now on the Oldsmobile side, there was a salary parking lot.

37

38Female: Mm-hm.

39

40Randy Thayer: Um, 'cause I do remember that when I first hired in but that had long gone
41 too by this time. That h-, that was gone in the...

42

43Female: [Hm 48:25].

44

45Randy Thayer: ...'70s. [thumping] [tsk] This was in the '80s [tapping] yet...

46

1Female: Yeah.
2
3Randy Thayer: ...that the salar-...
4
5Female: We still had a salary parking lot.
6
7John Fedewa: [Still do 48:31].
8
9Female: Mm-hm.
10
11John Fedewa: [Inaudible 48:32].
12
13Female: Because I tried to use my husband's parking pass to park there. [laughter]
14
15John Fedewa: [48:37] Did you? [laughter]
16
17Randy Thayer: So [thumping] that was probably the one surprise. The one...
18
19Female: Mm-hm.
20
21Randy Thayer: ...biggest surprise and – but, [background noises] you know, right after
22 Frank came to town, that was gone, so.
23
24Marilyn Coulter: [48:47] Now was that also in the clo-...
25
26Randy Thayer: I probably only ate in it 3 times 'cause it, it was gone [clanking] by the
27 time I worked at the Body Plant.
28
29Marilyn Coulter: [48:53] Now there was a clothing transition that changed for supervisors
30 too, [wasn't there 48:57]?
31
32Randy Thayer: Yeah. It was about the same time. [48:58] That the ties were going, you
33 mean?
34
35Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
36
37Randy Thayer: Yeah. Yeah. It was about the same time. Uh... [throat clearing]
38
39Marilyn Coulter: The ties and he white shirts and...
40
41Randy Thayer: Yeah. I was trying to think when that happened but [background noises]
42 it's about the same time.
43
44Cheryl McQuaid: I don't think that ever happened for Frank [Inaudible 49:11].
45
46Randy Thayer: It didn't. [laughter] He wore...

1
2 John Fedewa: [Inaudible 49:13]. [laughter]
3
4 Randy Thayer: He wore a tie the last day [laughter] that he worked, which was just last
5 year. [tapping] [clanking] [laughter]
6
7 Female: Mm-hm.
8
9 John Fedewa: Yeah. [clanking]
10
11 Randy Thayer: He's the only one though that I know of that, that did.
12
13 Cheryl McQuaid: Doreen Howard?
14
15 Doreen Howard: Um, you talked a lot about the, the daily grind and a lotta the things that
16 you did on a daily basis. [49:31] Um, was there any, um, [tsk] pranks or
17 jokes or anything that you did to kinda break the [clicking] monotony of,
18 of a routine day?
19
20 Female: [Inaudible 49:41]. [thumping]
21
22 Randy Thayer: Well I – yeah. I mean I d-, eh, eh, this isn't about me. [laughter] I'll tell
23 you 1 [clanking] good story. I'll tell ya 1 good story. It was funny. It was,
24 uh, [background noises] um, [engine humming] [ticking] actually it was
25 [LaRosa's 49:55] wedding, [engine humming] who is – now works here.
26 And we were having the bachelor party over at, uh, [snapping] – what was
27 the name of the Mexican restaurant on Washington Avenue?
28
29 Female: Ramone's.
30
31 Female: Ramone's.
32
33 Randy Thayer: Ramone's. [tsk] And we were having the bachelor party upstairs at
34 Ramone's. And [background noises] we got over there and nobody had a
35 VCR player or a monitor either one and we had another guy had brought
36 some tapes. [tapping] And [background noises] I was trying to think who
37 was with me. I can't remember who [tapping] it was that went with me but
38 we went back to the Trim Shop and c-, eh, eh – at the beginning of the
39 [clanking] of the nightshift, it was like probably 8:00 at night and we
40 carried the monitor and the VCR player out of the Trim Shop [inaudible
41 50:38] office [laughter] across the line, out through the garage [clanking]
42 and took it over to Ramone's and, [laughter] and, uh, [clanking] I'm trying
43 to think who the EPA was in nights. [Daryl Smitz 50:50] was on days.
44 Whoever the EPA [banging] was on ni-...
45
46 Cheryl McQuaid: [50:54] [Maryanne 50:54] Carpenter, [wasn't it 50:55]?

1
2Randy Thayer: No.
3
4Female: No. She's in...
5
6Randy Thayer: [Maryanne 50:56] w-... [tapping]
7
8Female: ...Trim upstairs.
9
10Marilyn Coulter: She was upstairs.
11
12Randy Thayer: Yeah. Well anyway, [clanking] whoever the EPA was, I know helped
13 [laughter] and we hauled it over there and then hauled it back Saturday
14 morning. [laughter] But we gotta lotta looks from people w-, [thumping]
15 watched us carry this TV set outta the plant [laughter] to, uh, for...
16
17Female: [Inaudible 51:14].
18
19Randy Thayer: ...for a bachelor [tapping] party. [Huh 51:16]. [background noises]
20
21Female: [Inaudible 51:18].
22
23Randy Thayer: I don't know. We had – [banging] I – it wasn't really all that – there
24 wasn't [clicking] that many scandals that I know of or anything that went
25 on. [laughter] I can tell you the time I fired Rusty. [51:28] Do you wanna
26 hear about that?
27
28Female: Rusty [inaudible 51:29].
29
30Female: [51:29] Rusty Ziegler?
31
32Female: [Inaudible 51:30].
33
34Female: Oh, yeah. [laughter]
35
36Female: [Inaudible 51:31].
37
38John Fedewa: [Inaudible 51:32] hear that one.
39
40Female: Oh, yeah. We wanna hear that. [laughter]
41
42Randy Thayer: Rusty put on emblems. That was his job, to put on emblems. We go to
43 [tapping] audit day after day after day and, uh, wrong emblems. You
44 know? Skylarks on Somersets [thumping] and, eh, [banging] Oldsmobile
45 emblems on Buicks. And [tsk] Bud [McCurdy 51:52], I think, was the
46 [MC 51:53] at the time. [background noises] Yeah. I know he was.

1 [McCurdy 51:55] was the [MC 51:55] and, and I said Bud, you gotta put
2 somebody behind [thumping] Rusty and either he's gotta put the right
3 emblems on [banging] – and you know Rusty. He's just [banging] – he'd
4 talk about something all day long and I was convinced he was – [as he was
5 52:08] talking wasn't keeping his concentration [thumping] on his work.
6 So I said [laughter] put somebody behind him and convince [thumping]
7 him he's gotta get the right [tapping] emblems on the damn car. [tapping]
8 So what I didn't know at the time [knocking] was he was being set up
9 [tsk] by another guy who I'm gonna leave the name out. Um, he was
10 [thumping] set up. But Rusty [background noises] ended up doing some
11 time [banging] in the street all over wrong emblems and [background
12 conversation] there was another guy down the line who hated Rusty
13 [tapping] and was setting him up.
14
15Female: Oh.
16
17Female: Oh.
18
19Randy Thayer: Yeah. And we finally got to the bottom of it. But [tapping] in the
20 meantime, [tapping] of course, Rusty got some of that time was paid
21 [laughter] [inaudible 52:46]. Uh, but [throat clearing] yeah. And, uh, and
22 [background noises] actually, uh, [clanking] uh, [crinkling] [tsk] one of
23 the nights after he was disciplined [crinkling] [popping] somebody [keyed
24 a] [inaudible 53:00] and I'll leave out what they wrote on the [inaudible
25 53:03] but it [thumping] but it wasn't very flattering to me. [background
26 noises] And they did it [thumping] trying to get everybody to think Rusty
27 also [banging] did that on his way out, which he didn't. [tsk] And, um, so
28 there's – that was probably a little exciting trying to get that unraveled and
29 Rusty [background noises] got caught in the middle of it [background
30 noises] and he really was being set up by this other guy. [clanking]
31
32Female: And it can happen.
33
34Randy Thayer: Yeah. It can happen. No question about it. So [inaudible 53:30].
35
36Female: [Inaudible 53:32]. [clanking]
37
38Randy Thayer: [tsk] [53:35] What else?
39
40Cheryl McQuaid: Well we'd like to thank you for sharing this time with us. [53:41] And is
41 there anything that you'd like to share with us [background noises] that
42 we've not asked you?
43
44Randy Thayer: [tsk] No. Other than maybe a little bit on the new plant. I mean I, I, I
45 really, uh, probably got the best job in GM right now. You know? Just not
46 only being able to build the new plant but to do it in my hometown [papers

1 rustling] and it's, uh, it's pretty special. And, you know, [background
2 noises] just the whole Lansing workforce makes it even, [tapping] even
3 more special. You know? I've gotten reacquainted with – when I first
4 moved back to town, [background noises] I was at Plant 3, uh, I'd been
5 away [papers rustling] a little over 5 years and, you know, [engine
6 humming] it was, it was tough getting names and faces back together and
7 you run into people in [Myers 54:17] and [background noises] – but, you
8 know, just as everybody is now coming back to work, [clanking] it's been
9 really neat, just, uh, getting – seeing it all come back together and,
10 [background noises] you know, I – it's like we said during [tapping] the
11 first car announcement [pen clicking] [that 54:30] was, uh – [tapping] it's
12 like writing one more chapter and, [pen clicking] and, uh, [tapping] you
13 know, our mission statement says it all, that, you know, we [building on
14 54:39], building on our heritage is what we're trying to do and take it, take
15 it to the next level. So [background noises] I got about the funnest job you
16 could have right now. [tapping]
17
18 Cheryl McQuaid: [54:49] Doreen, did you have a question?
19
20 Doreen Howard: Um, I just wanted to kind of make a statement [background noises]
21 [inaudible 54:55]. We've always been known as the Capitol of Quality,
22 things like that. [55:01] Um, how do y-, how do you see that statement and
23 how do you think that reflects on, uh, where we – like you said building
24 on our heritage [how that 55:10] [clanking] from where we were [tapping]
25 to what the future [will 55:14] [tapping] possibly bring to the area?
26
27 Randy Thayer: Well we've always built high quality vehicles now that [clanking] – the,
28 the bar has raised over all these years. I mean when we were building even
29 the old rear wheel drives back in the '80s, we were ranked in, in the plants.
30 There weren't any outside rankings. All we had were the internal GM
31 rankings but we were always in the top third of the plants, always. And so
32 it's, I mean it's always been a quality conscious, uh, group of folks here in
33 town. Um, and the N car did very, very well. And then the outside
34 rankings came, the JD Power stuff and we always, always did very, very
35 well there. So the, [background noises] the difference is the bar [is 55:54]
36 [papers rustling] with the outside competition, it just continued to raise,
37 uh, to the point where, [papers rustling] you know, quality is, [clanking]
38 uh, just the price a entry nowadays. [papers rustling]
39
40 I mean if, if you've got something out there that, that, uh, has an issue, uh,
41 and you're gonna be found out real quick. So, you know, you gotta be in
42 the pack [laughter] on quality or you're, you're just not gonna last at all. So
43 that part of the game has changed a lot. And people [papers rustling] use-,
44 customers used to tolerate a lot [clanking] more than anybody will today
45 and it'll catch up with ya real quick. But that hasn't ever been our problem.
46 I mean our problem's [thumping] been trying to convince ourselves that

1 we oughta improve when we're as good as we were because you gotta
2 understand the rest of the world is improving too. It's like we say in [GMS
3 56:44] class, eh, eh, if you think you're good, just stop for a minute...
4
5Female: [Hm 56:50].
6
7Randy Thayer: ...and people'll be going by ya. [laughter]
8
9Female: Yeah.
10
11Randy Thayer: You know? So [clanking] that's, that's probably always been our biggest
12 challenge, is convincing ourselves. I still hear it today. People say well
13 why do – we won all these awards. You just told us, we won all these
14 awards. Why do we have to improve? And we do. [laughter] You gotta
15 stay ahead of the pack. Even if you think we're as good as we are,
16 [thumping] if you stop even for a minute [throat clearing] or a year,
17 [background noises] somebody's gonna go by ya.
18
19Female: Mm-hm.
20
21Cheryl McQuaid: There's always room for improvement.
22
23Female: Yeah.
24
25Randy Thayer: Absolutely. I mean look at what the Koreans did in 5 years.
26
27Female: Mm-hm.
28
29Randy Thayer: They went from [background noises] from absolute crap, I mean stuff
30 there wouldn't anybody in their right mind buy. Five years later, they're
31 holding down lots and lots of the [clanking] top JD Power spots on lots a
32 cars in 5 years. They've – they made that, that big a move. So tough
33 business we're in.
34
35Female: Yes, [it is 57:48].
36
37Female: Yes.
38
39Randy Thayer: And I just hope we [clanking] can hang onto it and not s-, and I'm not even
40 talking about GM. [clicking] What I'm talking about as a country.
41 [clicking] [background noises] Um, we're definitely being threatened.
42 We're the next industry that's being threatened seriously. [coughing]
43 [thumping] Steel [tapping] had to [be 58:05] completely...
44
45Female: [Every 58:05] industry.
46

1Randy Thayer: ...[tapping] got reformed. TVs [clicking] are gone. Uh, apparel,
2 clothing... [tapping]
3

4Female: It's gone.
5

6Randy Thayer: All but gone. Uh, you know, so it's pretty scary. Someday...
7

8Female: Yeah.
9

10Randy Thayer: ...soembody's gonna wake up [background noises] and figure out we
11 can't...
12

13Female: Well...
14

15Randy Thayer: ...can't make a living flipping hamburgers [tapping] for each other.
16 [tapping]
17

18Marilyn Coulter: America has to realize that other people's ice is colder.
19

20Randy Thayer: Yeah. Well [tapping] and – you know, we'll [background noises] probably
21 be the first generation that our kids don't live as well [clanking] as us.
22

23Female: Mm-hm.
24

25Randy Thayer: My kids won't live, [clanking] live as well as I do. [background noises]
26 [clanking] I don't care how hard they work. [tapping] And they both went
27 to college [tapping] but they, they won't live as well as we do. [tapping]
28

29Female: Yeah. [background noises]
30

31Randy Thayer: And that's the first time. [thumping]. I mean there is no doubt in my mind
32 that I would live [papers rustling] better than my dad and I'm not talking
33 about college or not college. I'm not even talking about [thumping] any of
34 that. I'm just talking about in general when you look at, you know,
35 availability of jobs, base level of the economy, [tapping] you know.
36

37Marilyn Coulter: Well that's another thing when you talk about growing up in Lansing and
38 at one time Lansing was like a hub.
39

40Randy Thayer: Yep.
41

42Marilyn Coulter: We hear the older people say that they work at Fisher Body or Oldsmobile
43 or Motor Wheel or Diamond REO or [coughing] Atlas...
44

45Randy Thayer: Yeah.
46

1Marilyn Coulter: ...and now all those industries are gone now.
2

3Randy Thayer: Right. Exactly.
4

5Marilyn Coulter: 'Cause when we grew up...
6

7Randy Thayer: And...
8

9Marilyn Coulter: ...it was everywhere.
10

11Randy Thayer: Yeah. And Lansing was actually very fortunate [clanking] because in
12 Flint, that's all there was. In Lansing, we always had [throat clearing] 3
13 legs of the stool.
14

15Female: Mm-hm.
16

17Randy Thayer: We had all the State of Michigan employees and we had Michigan State...
18

19Female: Mm-hm.
20

21Randy Thayer: [tsk] ...and GM, so even, even in the years of the strike, which lasted
22 what, [tapping] 90 days [inaudible 59:39]. I mean it was pretty
23 catastrophic [laughter] for the area...
24

25Female: Mm-hm.
26

27Randy Thayer: ...but the area didn't collapse [thumping] because there was plenty of
28 other people still working for s-, the state government and for Michigan
29 State. In Flint, that wasn't true. Flint collapsed during that time.
30

31Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
32

33Randy Thayer: Lots and lots a merchants went outta business, couldn't make payments.
34 You know, they just folded up doors. [tapping] They just collapsed
35 because GM was all there was. Flint had 39,000 GM employees at one
36 time.
37

38Female: [Oh 1:00:07].
39

40Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [thumping]
41

42Randy Thayer: So...
43

44Female: [Oh 1:00:11]. [clanking]
45

46Randy Thayer: Okay.

1
2Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you [inaudible 1:00:12].
3
4Female: Thank you for your time.
5
6Female: [Inaudible 1:00:12] thank you.
7
8Randy Thayer: Nice chattin' with all of you.
9
10Female: All right. [pen clicking]
11
12Female: [Inaudible 1:00:15]. [background noises]
13
14Female: [Hm 1:00:17].
15
16Randy Thayer: [Who's not 1:00:17] back to work...
17
18
19/lo