

1 **Samuel Warren, an African American, discusses his career as a production worker**
2 **and UAW member at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**
3
4

5Cheryl McQuaid: This is Cheryl McQuaid with the Lansing Fisher Body Historical Team.
6 Today we're preparing to interview [papers rustling] Sam Warren. It is
7 January 9th, [papers rustling] 2006. We're in the GreenHouse on Michigan
8 Avenue across from 602 UAW Local Hall. Also present in the room?
9

10Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith.

11
12Gary Judy: Gary Judy.

13
14Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter.

15
16Cheryl McQuaid: [0:27] Sam, could you state your name and spell your last name for us?
17

18Samuel Warren: Samuel E. Warren, S-A-M-U-E-L, middle name is Earl, last Warren, W-A-R-
19 R-E-N.
20

21Cheryl McQuaid: [0:44] And what is your address, Sam?
22

23Samuel Warren: 2825 Woodview Drive, [sniffing] Lansing, Michigan.
24

25Cheryl McQuaid: [0:52] And are you married?
26

27Samuel Warren: Yes, I am.
28

29Cheryl McQuaid: [0:56] Do you have children?
30

31Samuel Warren: Yes, we have children.
32

33Cheryl McQuaid: Could you.
34

35Samuel Warren: A son that's 29 and a daughter that's 30 years old.
36

37Cheryl McQuaid: [1:07] Could you tell me a little bit about your education?
38

39Samuel Warren: I went to school in [tapping] Kansas City, Missouri and attended elementary
40 school at George Washington Carver and went to Central High School in
41 Kansas City, Missouri, and I've attended college at LCC, Lansing Community
42 College...
43

44Cheryl McQuaid: [1:32] Did you...
45

46Samuel Warren: ...in recent years.

1

2Cheryl McQuaid: ...did you spend any time in the military?

3

4

5Samuel Warren: Yes, I was, uh, in the military from '69 until '71. I got drafted into the army.

6

7Cheryl McQuaid: [1:52] Um, why did you come to Fisher Body for a job?

8

9Samuel Warren: Well, actually, when I came to Lansing, I wasn't looking for a job. I didn't
10 know anything about Fisher Body. [car engine] Came here at 19 years old
11 and, to stay with an aunt that was recently widowed, and, uh, I w-, as soon as I
12 got to Lansing, she said, uh, "There's a lotta good jobs in this town." So she
13 said Fisher Body, Oldsmobile, Diamond Rio, and Motor Wheel I think was
14 some a the companies that she mentioned, and she said you can, uh, use, uh,
15 one a your cousins for a reference at Fisher Body, so I just went over and put
16 in application, uh [car engine], and thinkin' that they [car engine] might call
17 me one day but they probably won't call me, uh, and I got hired the same day.
18 [laughter]

19

20Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter.

21

22Marilyn Coulter: [2:52] Uh, Sam, when you said you went and put a, a application in, did you
23 do that at the plant itself and what was the process?

24

25Samuel Warren: Yes, I actually went into the Plant, to the Personnel Department I think it was,
26 and filled out a application and I was hired, basically hired that day. I took a
27 physical and I was to report back I think the following Monday, that was, uh,
28 February the 11th, 1969. So, I – it was unbelievable to me that [car engine] I
29 got hired [car engine] that fast.

30

31Marilyn Coulter: [3:31] S-, so when you walked into the Plant, what was your thoughts?

32

33Samuel Warren: My thoughts were that I didn't think I was gonna get hired. I thought I was
34 gonna put in a application, but if you mean when I walked in the Plant to
35 actually start work, uh, I was kinda scared, because I hadn't actually came to
36 Lansing to, uh, get a job; I just came to, uh, to meet some a my relatives and
37 just see what Lansing was like, and here I am, I'm going to work, but, uh,
38 people let me know that I was blessed right away. They said, "You have one a
39 the best paying jobs here in Lansing, and you're, you're workin' for GM. The
40 ladies are gonna be after you. You gonna be able to buy a new car and
41 everything." As far as the work environment, it was pretty scary bein' in the
42 Body Shop and, but, uh, lot of older folks, uh, and most a them was men at
43 that time, I can't remember any women, they, uh, made me feel comfortable
44 and kinda took me up under wings, but the work was really hard and, uh, I
45 was quite scared.

46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. [4:40] Do you remember the first job that you were taken
2 to?
3

4 Samuel Warren: Yes, I remember, and I remember who broke me in, and I, I re-, remember my
5 supervisor's name and, and it was in the Body Shop. They took me up to a
6 guy, and he's deceased now; his name was [Fred Beach 5:01]. His daughter
7 worked in there for the, in the cafeteria here recently, until the Plant closed;
8 her name's [Marsha Beach 5:08]. But Fred, he was a, they call an Intermittent
9 Relief Man at the time. He broke me in on my first job, and the supervisor was
10 [tapping] I think, uh, [Charlie Rose 5:19] at the time, and, uh, [car engine] I
11 struggled, I really struggled learning the job. It was pretty hard. It was hard on
12 my hands, uh, opening clamps, uh, from the Body Shop fixtures and, uh,
13 [tapping] it was some physical work and I was, uh, shouted out and, uh, tryin'
14 to keep up and, but he stuck with me and...
15

16 Cheryl McQuaid: Do you.
17

18 Samuel Warren: ...it was pretty scary.
19

20 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:47] You said you were shouted at. Why were you shouted at?
21

22 Samuel Warren: Uh, ya know, uh, "You haven't learned that yet? I just showed that to ya." I
23 mean, it's frustrating tryin' to teach somebody a job, uh, uh, and I wasn't used
24 to that type a work, you know. Basically I had washed dishes as a young man,
25 teenager, and, uh, pots and pans at restaurants, been a busboy and those kinda
26 jobs, uh, but [clicking], uh, the physical, uh, the physical part a that job and,
27 and, uh, the mental part, tryin' to keep up on that assembly line, was pretty
28 challenging and almost overwhelming, but we made it.
29

30 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:47] Did you – could you explain a little bit more about what job you did?
31 What, what were the elements [background conversation] of the job? Did you
32 – I hear about [background conversation] spot welding. Did ya spot weld?
33

34 Samuel Warren: The first job was not spot welding. As I said, I was, uh, uh, applying, uh, uh,
35 big body parts to fixtures and, uh, opening those clams and fixtures, but, um,
36 it was shortly after that I did do some spot welding in the Body Shop and I
37 spot welded, uh, on the side frame area where the two side frames, left and
38 right, came together, and, uh, with the floor pan of the car, and I did some spot
39 welding on side frame. Matter a fact, there's a couple guys in there right now,
40 they nicknamed me "Sideframe," and I saw one here recently and he, every
41 time he sees me, he shouts, "Sideframe!" [laughter] So that's what, that was
42 my job, spot welding on the side frame. Uh, I think it was, uh, the fender area.
43

44 Cheryl McQuaid: [7:43] So how long did you do the clamp job?
45

46 Samuel Warren: I would say maybe 2 or 3 weeks.

1
2Cheryl McQuaid: [7:51] And then you were bunked or how did you get to the Side Frame Area?
3
4Samuel Warren: They just, uh, [tapping] brought another trainee into it and, uh, what those,
5 that was actually [papers rustling] one a the easier jobs; you know, [tapping]
6 the work wasn't usin' a, a gun or, you know, a spot welding gun or anything
7 [paper rustling] like that, ya know. So, they, uh, took me to a more, uh,
8 [papers rustling] should I say, uh, a job that was even more challenging than
9 the applying, uh, fixtures and opening clamps. So spot welding, uh, th-, that
10 was challenging, but it was pretty fun too. [clicking]
11
12Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter.
13
14Marilyn Coulter: [8:31] So Sam, um, can you describe for us what the environment was like in
15 the Body Shop?
16
17Samuel Warren: The work environment?
18
19Marilyn Coulter: Yeah, just the work environment. What was it like to work [inaudible 8:41]?
20
21Samuel Warren: Oh the work environment, it was, it was hot. We wore the protective clothing.
22 We wore the glasses with the side shields and we had to wear hats on our head
23 because spark would fly all over, even if you were walking through their area.
24 It was smoky, and it was, uh, noisy. So, it was, it was one a the, should I say
25 the most challenging places, probably, to work in, in the Plant, because I'm
26 workin' all three departments. And, uh, actually, when I was transferred or I
27 was moved from the Body Shop, the, and went to the Trim Area, they told me
28 I was goin' to paradise.
29
30Marilyn Coulter: [9:33] So when you were in Body Shop, um, you had to wear the protective
31 clothing and where you wore glasses and...
32
33Samuel Warren: Gloves.
34
35Marilyn Coulter: ...gloves and hats and...
36
37Samuel Warren: Mm-hm.
38
39Marilyn Coulter: ...stuff to cover your skin, and you said it was noisy and because it was noisy,
40 how did that affect the way you communicated with people on the floor?
41
42Samuel Warren: Well, it was less communication, uh, in the Body Shop area compared to
43 Trim. You basically communicated with the person right next to you or maybe
44 across from you. It wasn't, uh, ya know, a noise-free environment or almost
45 noise-free environment that y-, I experienced in Trim. So, uh, we did talk, but
46 we did most of our talking on our breaks and, uh, that's just the way it was in

1 the Body Shop in the area that I worked. It was, it was really noisy. There
2 were no radios or, uh, [background movement] in the areas I worked in
3 [inaudible 10:35] [background noises], people [door closing] had radios. [door
4 closing]
5
6 Marilyn Coulter: [10:39] How long did you work in the Body Shop?
7
8 Samuel Warren: I worked in the Body Shop from '71, late '71 until around '76, I think it was
9 up until '76 [door opening] and, uh, then I went to Trim.
10
11 Marilyn Coulter: [11:06] So now you said your hired in in '69, what – is that when you went to
12 the military or something?
13
14 Samuel Warren: Well, I guess I could tell ya how that all happened. After being hired into
15 Fisher Body and workin' there for 6 months – well, I would say after I worked
16 there 3 months...
17
18 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
19
20 Samuel Warren: ...I w-, I received a letter from Uncle Sam [door closing] and it said to go take
21 a physical, and so we took a physical in Detroit and I was, uh, given a, uh,
22 [tapping], um, a test down there, [background movement] a few tests
23 [background movement] and whatnot, and then [background movement] 3
24 month after that, so this is 6 months after working in the Plant, I actually
25 received [background noises] greetings from Uncle Sam; I was drafted into
26 the United States Army. So I spend 2 years [background movement] in the
27 army, from about [banging] August '69 until August '71. [background
28 movement]
29
30 Marilyn Coulter: [12:05] So at that time you went to the Vietnam War?
31
32 Samuel Warren: Yes. [clanking]
33
34 Marilyn Coulter: [12:10] And [clanking] so General Motors [background movement] held your
35 job for you.
36
37 Samuel Warren: Yes, mm-hm.
38
39 Marilyn Coulter: [12:10] And so, did you notice any differences when you – from the time you
40 left until when you came back were there what types a differences and did you
41 come back into the Body Shop?
42
43 Samuel Warren: [coughing] Yes, I came back into the Body Shop, and probably, uh, I don't
44 know how things had changed in the Plant. They hadn't changed that much in
45 2 years, but I had changed as a person. I was, uh, a little more militant and I, I

1 didn't take as much. I, uh, had been at war and, uh, I wasn't as, uh, friendly as
2 I am now.
3
4Marilyn Coulter: Okay.
5
6Samuel Warren: And I, I didn't know a lot. I was just a young – not a hothead, but I didn't
7 have the people skills that, that, uh, that I did..
8
9Marilyn Coulter: You've been...
10
11Samuel Warren: ...uh, develop...
12
13Marilyn Coulter: ...through a lot.
14
15Samuel Warren: ...yeah. So, uh, but we did make friends. Some a them might a not been the
16 right friends, [laughter] the rights choices after comin' back from the military,
17 and some a the things I experienced over there, some a the things I did, the
18 negative things that I did in the military, ya know.
19
20Marilyn Coulter: [13:26] So when you came back to the Plant, Sam, what procedure did you
21 have to go through? Did ya just come back in and let'm know you were back
22 in the country and you were outta work, you're outta the work now, it's time
23 to come back to work? How did that go for you? What was [inaudible 13:38]?
24
25Samuel Warren: Well, actually, uh, I, I left to enter the army, uh, at my draft board in Kansas
26 City, Missouri, so I returned back home to Kansas City, and I was actually
27 gonna give Fisher Body, and I wanted to go to Electr-, Electronics...
28
29Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
30
31Samuel Warren: ... Institute in Kansas City and, uh, I wanted to, uh, have a better job than
32 Fisher Body. Silly me, I didn't – I wasn't the greatest, uh, student, uh, uh, with
33 math...
34
35Marilyn Coulter: [clicking] Mm-hm.
36
37Samuel Warren: ...and we went down and looked at, had a tour of the Electronics Institute in
38 Kansas City and I saw all this algebra and everything on the board and I said,
39 "Hey, I don't know if I wanna go through with this." I had saved quite a bit a
40 money...
41
42Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
43
44Samuel Warren: ...for that period in, in the, while I was in Vietnam and, and I bought a brand
45 new '71 Buick Electric 225 and, uh, I didn't need a cosign or anything
46 [clicking] and they basically, uh, uh, after bein' the army, that was, uh, my

1 credentials that I had, about \$1,500 to put down cash. So now I have a car
2 payment, and that's when I made my mind up; "You have a job in Lansing."
3 Fisher Body, you can return after 90 days after bein' in the military 'cause you
4 were on military leave. I had all this paperwork in that I could do that, that
5 was an option, and I was strugglin' to try to decide what I wanted to do, and I,
6 I got on the highway and high-tailed it back up here to Michigan to, uh, ya
7 know, people were tell me that GM, uh, that's one a the best jobs you could
8 have, GM [inaudible 15:20] 3. So I came back to work and I went right back
9 to the Body Shop, that's where I was assigned to.

10

11Marilyn Coulter: And so it was a little bit different for you. [15:30] How long did you stay in
12 the Body Shop?

13

14Samuel Warren: I stayed in the Body Shop when I returned in, in, uh, probably November '71
15 and I stayed until about '76 or '77.

16

17Marilyn Coulter: Oh.

18

19Gary Judy: [15:49] Sam, uh – Gary, Gary Judy here – uh, what kind of experience after
20 you came back from 'Nam did you have with, uh, fellow workers that were
21 also veterans? Was there any kind of brotherhood? Did you feel a
22 brotherhood, uh, and maybe tyin' it into the union sense at all?

23

24Samuel Warren: Yes, I f-, I felt a brother who had, uh, and I, I, not to wanting to sound biased,
25 but, uh, when I was in, uh, in [papers rustling] Vietnam, uh, I had a experi-, a
26 cultural experience that, uh, you know, there's a movie out called Bloods, and
27 the soul brothers at that time, we had some kinda special relationship, and we
28 always talked about when we were in Vietnam how we were gonna come
29 back and, and, and get on the right path and try to, you know, uh, uh, reach
30 certain levels in life, you know, 'cause even though this was, uh, early '70s, I
31 experienced the '60s too, and we wanted to progress and, and, and do better
32 and bring help bringin' young brothers up and, and teach them.

33

34 Ya know, we had all these dreams [chair squeaking] that when we come back,
35 as we said to the world that we were gonna, you know, try to make it to the
36 top, and, uh, so when I came back, uh, when I did meet, uh, fellow workers or
37 people, uh, even outside a the Plant that had the same experience that I've
38 had, and some of them had had some pretty, uh, more, uh, grim experience.
39 Mine wasn't that grim in Vietnam but, uh, it was still a war and, uh, so there's
40 always, uh, a special relationship with fellow veterans. It doesn't matter
41 whether it's army or navy, marines, or whatever. Air Force, as – just knowing,
42 uh, that you, uh, speaking with a veteran, you know, they have a certain
43 respect for that person.

44

45Gary Judy: [17:55] Was, did ya find a lotta people coming back from Vietnam that
46 worked in the Plant?

1
2 Samuel Warren: Not a whole lot, uh, not right away, but eventually, throughout my career in
3 the Plant, we've met a lot, yeah.
4
5 Gary Judy: [18:10] How, how did you feel about the union, uh, [papers rustling] before
6 you went to 'Nam and then you came back from 'Nam and worked in the
7 Plant? Uh, did your feelings working in a union environment or in the Plant
8 [car engine] change at all from, from serving in 'Nam in the military?
9
10 Samuel Warren: Well, actually, I had an experience when I was, uh, probably 16 years old that
11 I look back on now that, that it gives a ind-, indication that I would be
12 involved in the union, if I could tell that story, I...
13
14 Cheryl McQuaid: Oh, please.
15
16 Samuel Warren: ...I will. When I was 16, my – I was workin' at a company called Carter's
17 Catering, and my brother, he worked there too, my older brother who's 2
18 years older than myself, and a lotta friends in the neighborhood, if they
19 needed [car engine] extra help [car engine] for picnic parties and whatnot,
20 they would send two, two, uh, guys here or two there, maybe three or four
21 other catering jobs, and we were washin' the dishes, we were washin' pots
22 and pans, we were loadin' the trucks, and at 16, after I started drivin', we were
23 even drivin' the truck sometimes. We were helpin' the cook. We were, had a
24 lotta different, uh, tasks that we did for this company, Carter's Catering, and
25 at that time, we were makin' a dollar an hour, and around about October or
26 November, I got some kinda, uh, idea in my head that we were gonna go and
27 ask Carter for 25 cents more a hour [laughter] and, I don't know, I guess I, I
28 was sorta like the leader or the spokesperson with my buddies in the
29 neighborhood that we a-, that we all worked there at times together.
30
31 And, and so I had a little support too of'm say, "Well, well, we'll stand behind
32 you, we'll go down with ya," as we said back then; "We'll go down with
33 you." And so we went to ask Carter for a 25-cent raise, from a dollar to a
34 dollar and a quarter, and actually, the manager there, her – I remember her
35 name; Anne – she said, "What? You want a dollar 25-cent raise?" And she
36 said, "Wait a minute." She got on the phone and she called Carter up, and, and
37 she left the place and locked us in the catering kitchen downstairs. It was the
38 VFW Hall, right outside the kitchen and bar up front, so the catering business
39 was in the back. Locked us in there, and when Carter came, he wanted to
40 know who, who was bein' a trouble maker, "What," uh, "What the hell you
41 mean want a, a raise?" You know, and I said, "If we don't get a raise, we're
42 gonna quit." And, uh, "You can't quit; it's the holiday season comin' up," and
43 I said, "Well, we're gonna quit. We demand a 25-cent raise."
44
45 Here I am at 16, I didn't actually know, uh, what I was doin', but it was in my
46 heart, I knew it was [coughing] an injustice. We were doin' more work for the

1 pay and we deserved it. And so, uh, after comin' back, uh, bein' in the
2 Service, coming back in the Plant, hearin' a little bit about unions and
3 whatnot, uh, I still didn't know where the Union Hall was, even up until '76
4 [background movement] and that's where it was basically at right now. I
5 didn't know much about the union. I heard about [rattling] union meetings
6 and, um, so it was layin' dormant in me, that, even that little seed in that
7 experience that I had at 16 tryin' to get some kinda economic justice.
8
9 Cheryl McQuaid: Jerri Smith.
10
11 Jerri Smith: [21:55] Did you get your 25-cent-an-hour raise?
12
13 Samuel Warren: No, we didn't, but I had a physical con-, confrontation with Carter and,
14 [laughter] and it was, uh, it was quite a story and, and, [clicking] and I will
15 know [laughter] where I could get better wages and, uh, [papers rusting] I
16 tried to get some benefits, I wanted more, and I left there, and my brother
17 stayed. I was pissed with him. [laughter] And, uh, [laughter] that's another
18 story. But the seed had been planted. I, I never did like to [background
19 movement] see injustice and I always rooted for [background noises] for the
20 underdog in that type a situation [papers rustling] out there, so that's where
21 I'm at. [papers rustling]
22
23 Cheryl McQuaid: So. [recorder clicking] [background movement] [chair squeaking] [22:39]
24 Sam, did you have a break in your seniority at GM before serving in the
25 military?
26
27 Samuel Warren: No, I didn't. Your seniority, it goes on while you're in the military. You're on
28 military leave. Ya don't lose any time.
29
30 Cheryl McQuaid: [22:55] So you kept your '69 seniority hire-in date.
31
32 Samuel Warren: Yes, yes I did.
33
34 Cheryl McQuaid: [22:59] And did you notice any attitude change in the people that you used to
35 work with when you came back from [door opening] bein' in the Service?
36
37 Samuel Warren: [background conversation] Yes, I did. Some a the people that, that knew me
38 for the 6 short months I was there before entering the military, they, uh,
39 [clicking] applauded me, actually, and, [chair squeaking] and, and thanked me
40 and, uh, "Hey, you made it." [laughter] "You made it," ya know. "We didn't
41 think you were gonna make it." A lotta people don't make it and didn't make
42 it.
43
44 Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter.
45

1 Marilyn Coulter: [23:35] Sam, did, um, your coworkers do anything special for you when you
2 left or upon your return insofar as dinner, takin' ya out, anything like that?
3

4 Samuel Warren: No, they didn't do anything, uh, special. I've met some, uh, some wor-,
5 workers, coworkers that we became, uh, pretty good friends and they took me
6 out for a drink after I got back, but for the most part, I was in another area,
7 and some a the guys that I worked with, older guys, they – I would see them
8 in the cafeteria, and I [door closing] sat there and ate with them and I told'm
9 some a my stories. They [inaudible 24:18] [banging] quite interested in what
10 happened and whatnot, but, uh, they didn't give me a dinner. I think some,
11 somebody bought me a dinner in the cafeteria. [background noises]
12

13 Marilyn Coulter: [24:29] Sam, after coming back from the military, was there anything that you
14 learned in the military or anything like that that helped you in your job when
15 you returned?
16

17 Samuel Warren: Yes, it did. Um, [tapping] I know that, uh, when you're in a fox hole,
18 everybody's in the same color. Everybody's the same [door closing] color if
19 you're in a fox hole. So you got your buddy's back and, and he has your back,
20 and, uh, so I did learn some diversity, because you have people, uh, of all
21 cultures in the military and we're in it for one cause, you know, and so. [door
22 opening] Uh, you learned to trust a little more, you know, uh, if you're
23 working close with people and you, you just learn to, uh, work better in, in
24 general because you're in the military and that's what's expected, and...
25

26 Marilyn Coulter: Mm.
27

28 Samuel Warren: ...and, ya know, you, you just came from a situation where you follow orders,
29 and so basically I, I learned more discipline and I learned, uh, like I said, some
30 diversity, and, and how to, uh, get along better and, [background
31 conversation] but you know, I, I still had a few militant ideas that I had got
32 from people that I met in the military, you know.
33

34 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. Let's fast forward to – Jerri.
35

36 Cheryl McQuaid: Jerri Smith.
37

38 Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith. [25:54] I just wondered, Sam, lotta times with the Vietnam War, a
39 lotta people were not happy with the war itself and they treated a lotta the
40 veterans badly. You didn't get any a that reception [papers rustling] at Fisher
41 Body when you came back?
42

43 Samuel Warren: No, I don't remember gettin' any a that. [papers rustling]
44

45 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. [26:15] Sam, what was your favorite job in the Body Shop?
46

1 Samuel Warren: There was a job where I [tapping] think we put the front part a the floor pan
2 into a machine and, uh, the machine, a robot, [background movement] welded
3 that, and we didn't have a whole [background movement] buncha robots at
4 that time, and that was a good job because we could stack material on racks
5 and over on the floor, and we basically gave each other a break. [door
6 opening] Uh, my partner and I, we would take breaks [door opening] and, and
7 we could build jobs ahead. [papers rustling] So that's probably my favorite
8 job in the Body Shop.
9

10 Cheryl McQuaid: [27:03] And do you have a least favorite?
11

12 Samuel Warren: [door opening] The least favorite was the first one. [laughter] Even though it
13 wasn't the hardest one, it definitely wasn't the hardest one, spot welding was
14 more challenging and everything, but just opening the clamps and, uh, and,
15 uh, ya hit, hittin' those, uh, [papers rustling] thing for 9, 10, 11 hours a day,
16 [papers rustling] uh – well, at that time, it wasn't so much [background
17 noises] overtime. I was on the day shift, and I'd say 9 hours [background
18 noises] a day, hitting those clamps with your hand, I, I'd go home and my
19 hands would be throbbing, even though we wore gloves, and, and, um, my
20 body would be [papers rustling] physically tired and.
21

22 Cheryl McQuaid: [27:46] And you said that you went to Trim – you'd spent, what, about 10
23 years in the Body Shop?
24

25 Samuel Warren: Hired in in '69, so if you subtract, uh, 2 years outta that, up until I would say
26 '77, that's 8 years. I spent about, I would say about 5 years...
27

28 Cheryl McQuaid: In the Body Shop?
29

30 Samuel Warren: ...in the Body Shop. Actually, 2 years, uh, in the military and 3 – 90 days
31 after, um, leaving the military. So, uh, about 5 and a half years.
32

33 Cheryl McQuaid: [28:23] And you said that you went onto the Trim Department and that people
34 [clicking] said you were going to paradise. How did...
35

36 Samuel Warren: Mm-hm.
37

38 Cheryl McQuaid: ...you get to the Trim Department and was it paradise?
39

40 Samuel Warren: Actually, I got medical out of the, medically restricted out of the Body Shop.
41 Um, I started havin' problems and I, uh, um, was diagnosed with a, uh, with a
42 condition called sarcoidosis, and, uh, I was playin' basketball and got winded,
43 and I went in to the emergency and had x-rays and whatnot, and, and it was
44 pretty scary at that time, but it's a lung condition, and it's called sarcoidosis.
45 And so, uh, after, uh, havin' problems with that, I, uh, the smoke started

1 botherin' me and, and, uh, just breathing in general in the Body Shop, and so
2 I, I got a permanent restriction outta the Body Shop because a my condition.
3
4 And, uh, [background conversation] the condition is one that, uh, it can be
5 kinda dormant and then it can go, uh, it's sorta like into, uh, not remission, but
6 it could go, like I said, it, it could be active or inactive, [background
7 conversation] and so once it became inactive, uh – it did after I was taken
8 outta Body Shop and moved to Trim, [background conversation] and that was
9 the only choice. Uh, they weren't, wasn't gonna send me to Paint with that
10 restriction, so. [background noises] But people say, "You're in, in paradise,
11 and you don't have to wear any coveralls or [background conversation] the
12 protective gloves and things [background conversation] that, equipment that
13 you wore, protective equipment that you wore in, uh, [background
14 conversation] in the Body Shop, so. [background conversation]
15
16 Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter.
17
18 Marilyn Coulter: [30:16] But in terms of doing the actual working, [background conversation]
19 was doing the job, were doing the jobs in Paint paradise comp-, compared to
20 doing w-, I mean, doing the jobs in Trim paradise compared, compared to
21 doing the jobs in Body Shop?
22
23 Samuel Warren: Well, um, [tapping] just getting outta the Body Shop and, and feeling better,
24 you know, my health-wise, it was paradise, and but the jobs that I, I [car
25 engine], I was placed on, uh, uh, that sorta like a shock too. It seemed like it
26 was, uh, more fast-paced in Trim for whatever reason.
27
28 Marilyn Coulter: [31:00] Sam, working in Trim and working in the Body Shop, what were
29 some a the biggest differences outside of not having to deal with the smoke?
30 What were some a the difference, differences that you noticed in terms of the
31 work, in terms of the people, in terms of what you did for breaks, where you
32 went for lunch? Tell us a little bit about when you first came to Trim. What
33 was your life like?
34
35 Samuel Warren: Well, it, uh, did seem that I met more people and I was able to communicate
36 more because of the lack of the noise. [background conversation] Uh, you
37 didn't, we didn't have radios blasting, [background conversation] uh, at that
38 time like they did when the Plant closed, ya know. Uh, there's more bass in
39 the music and everything now and everybody, maybe a few people had a
40 boom box, started to meet, uh, more women had more, uh, uh, should I say
41 more access to meeting women coworkers because, uh, uh, I guess they
42 placed most a the women, more women in Trim Department. So it was a, uh,
43 opportunity to meet more people, and, uh, and actually see what they looked
44 like. [laughter] You could wear whatever you wanted to in Trim and
45 everybody basically looked the same in the uniform in the Body Shop, so it

1 was, it was, I was feelin' better, like I said, physically and, and it was, felt like
2 paradise compared to working in the Body Shop.
3

4Marilyn Coulter: [32:42] So what'd you do for lunch? For lunches? How'd you, how'd you
5 pass the time workin' in the Plant?
6

7Samuel Warren: Basically, I, uh, did negative things. I'm, I'm a child a the '60s and '70s, and,
8 and some a the experience I experienced in Vietnam and same a the
9 [background conversation], the, uh, maybe habits or almost-habits, uh, I
10 continued when I came back. [background conversation] I never did get too
11 far out of hand because I did get married, uh, in '72 [background
12 conversation] and I always kept things in check, but when I spent my time out
13 with the boys, uh, at lunch, doin' some things that, uh, the '60s and '70s
14 people were doing. I never ever drank before I went in the army, let alone, uh,
15 smoked anything, but, uh, after goin' in the army, I experienced it all and, so,
16 uh, when I came back to the Plant, it was a lotta people that were, were, uh,
17 doin' recreational things on their lunch hour, sometime before entering the
18 Plant, sometime after the work was over we'd get together.
19

20Marilyn Coulter: [34:01] So the Plant is surrounded – there's Harry's, there's Gus's, there's the
21 Irish pub. There were eating and spirit establishments around. Did you
22 frequent those places at lunch and breaks?
23

24Samuel Warren: No, b-, basically we'd jump in a, uh, station wagon, and it was pretty smoky
25 in the station wagon. We'd drive down here on Rosemary, I think, and, uh,
26 we'd get us some, uh, some head cheese or some cold cuts, snacks and chips
27 and things you could munch on once ya got back to work after lunch, because
28 you may have the munchies, that they call the munchies.
29

30Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
31

32Samuel Warren: And, uh, we'd walk back in through Plant protection and they would, uh,
33 kinda know what we did for lunch. [laughter]
34

35Marilyn Coulter: [34:55] So during that time, did you have what was known [throat clearing] as
36 The Wagon and did you partake in that and can you tell us what that was?
37

38Samuel Warren: Oh, I was a very good, one of their main customers 'cause I always wanted
39 somethin' to munch on [laughter] and, uh, we just loved, uh, the Wagon, and,
40 and sometimes they would have some flirty young women on the, that, uh,
41 had the Wagon job. I guess they were lookin' for a boyfriend or somethin' so
42 they could, uh, maybe get some bennies, ya know? [laughter] Yeah, I
43 remember quite a few a the wagon girls, uh, I was pretty friendly with but not
44 to the point, uh, of, uh, should I say doin' anything, uh, inappropriate; I was
45 married, but there was a lotta flirting goin' on and, and we used to love to see
46 the Wagon comin'.

1
2Marilyn Coulter: [35:50] And now, did that come, that came what, how did that come, like, and
3 what, can you describe what a Wagon was?
4
5Samuel Warren: Yeah, they would basically push a cart, uh, [car engine] to a certain area in, in
6 the Body Shop area or even up in Trim, and they would come at, uh, break
7 time, a little ahead a break time, and they would have juices [tapping] on the
8 Wagon, donuts, some, uh, sandwiches, uh, chips and candy, gum and those
9 type things. [background conversation] I don't know if they had coffee, but
10 I'd basically get my chips and juice, and people loved the Wagon. I, I still
11 hear people to this day talkin' 'bout "they took our wagon," ya know?
12 [laughter]
13
14Marilyn Coulter: [36:41] And so that was, um, what, 6 to 7 minutes in the morning and 6 to 7
15 minutes in the afternoon?
16
17Samuel Warren: Yes, mm-hm. [background conversation]
18
19Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. [36:53] Sam, when you came to Trim, what kind of job did
20 you, were you put on?
21
22Samuel Warren: [chair squeaking] When I came to Trim, I was put on, uh, believe it or not, I
23 was put on [background conversation] a job that was sorta similar to my first
24 job in the Body Shop where I had to use my hands where we're putting a door
25 rubber around the door, [background noises] so when I came I had to use my
26 palm to, uh, [background conversation], to, uh, place the rubber on and, and
27 secure it so it, I did have some problems with throbbing hands again, once
28 again. It was like flashbacks to [background conversation] – so, uh, that was, I
29 think, my first job in Trim [background conversation] and it was on the B
30 Line, [background conversation] upstairs on the B Line. [clicking]
31 [background conversation] And, uh, I remember a couple a my supervisors. I
32 think one's name was [Paulette 37:47] [background conversation] and she had
33 been recently put [background conversation] on supervision, and, uh, actually,
34 before I left the Body Shop, I was asked to, uh, uh, if I wanted an opportunity
35 to go on supervision and, and I turned it down. [tapping]
36
37Marilyn Coulter: Hm. So.
38
39Cheryl McQuaid: [38:08] Did, um – was that on the day shift, the door rubber job?
40
41Samuel Warren: No, it was on nights. [background conversation]
42
43Cheryl McQuaid: That was nights?
44
45Samuel Warren: Mm-hm.
46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: [38:15] When did you go to the night shift?
2
3 Samuel Warren: I was on nights and I, [background conversation] uh, I was on nights in Trim.
4 [background conversation]
5
6 Cheryl McQuaid: [38:23] Oh, so your amount of time on the day shift was only [papers rustling]
7 before you went to Vietnam? Just your like first 90 days or?
8
9 Samuel Warren: Yes. I was on, I – [background conversation] days the first 6 months [papers
10 rustling] after hiring in, when I came back from, [papers rustling] uh, military
11 service, I [background noises] was immediately put on nights. [background
12 conversation] So when I was [background noises], uh, moved to Trim in I
13 think '77, I was still on nights.
14
15 Cheryl McQuaid: [38:57] Did you ever buy – you said that you used to buy munchies from the,
16 the Wagon that would come through. Did you ever buy anything from other
17 vendors in the Plant? [background conversation]
18
19 Samuel Warren: At that time, uh, [background conversation] after first going to Trim on night
20 shift, I don't [car engine] remember any independent vendors. I cannot recall
21 any independent – it seems like when I went to days – [background
22 movement] I wasn't on nights that long before I went to days in Trim – uh,
23 that's when I started seeing, uh, independent vendors, and there were plenty
24 of'm, [background conversation] uh, serving all types of goods, uh, whether it
25 be, uh, food or beverages, coffee, pop, or whatever. Sandwiches. But I saw,
26 uh, many vendors. Eventually became one myself.
27
28 Cheryl McQuaid: [39:57] And [laughter] what kinda vending did you do?
29
30 Samuel Warren: I sold pop in there for quite a few years and I, I tried to sell sandwiches in
31 there. [car engine] Uh, we had a fella name of [Frenchie 40:11]. [throat
32 clearing] Well, actually, there was two Frenchies; one was Frenchie and one
33 was The Frenchman, and they were vendors, and their, they were one was in
34 my area and the other was in the area down from me, and I was kinda I guess
35 fascinated on the money that they made, uh, on the side and so I, uh, had
36 opportunity to, uh, sell pop. I was helpin' a guy. He, he sold the pop on night
37 shifts, Skilled Tradesman, and he want-, he asked me to sell, uh, kinda watch
38 his, uh, operation or his business durin' the daytime, he would open it up, and
39 I could stock it up and look after the money, and so he – the money never did
40 grow that much, the business didn't grow, and he said, "You can have this.
41 They don't wanna drink any pop on days." So he gave it up and gave it to me
42 and I just kept pursuin' it and, and [background conversation] someone else
43 that was in the Trim area, they had a business sellin' pop, and they, they gave
44 it up then, so there was no more competition and everybody started comin' to
45 me. So then it grew from there.
46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: Gary Judy.
2
3 Gary Judy: [41:27] Sam, how much extra money could make a week in the plants
4 vending, selling pop and sandwiches or, or whatever over and above your
5 check?
6
7 Samuel Warren: Well, um, I had, uh, always had spending money. I had spending money, [car
8 engine] and there was a lotta guy in there, I used to tease'm. They, they
9 basically figured it out [car engine] and used to tell me how much I made, ya
10 know, and I used to [laughter] tease'm; I said, "What do you guys do, get in
11 your van pools and, and go home and, and on the way home you try to figure
12 out how much Sam Warren is makin' sellin' pop?" Ya know...
13
14 Cheryl McQuaid: Mm.
15
16 Samuel Warren: ... "Okay, he bring 6 12-packs in every day and, ya know," and take it from
17 there, but basically, at one time, [coughing] I think I, in the summertime, I
18 made, a 70 or 75-dollar profit one day, and that, that's probably the record
19 one-day.
20
21 Gary Judy: In one day.
22
23 Samuel Warren: Yeah, mm-hm. I did that in one day.
24
25 Gary Judy: [42:33] How many, how many years did you do that for, the vending?
26
27 Samuel Warren: Well, that \$75 wasn't one, wasn't, ya know, consistent, but I remember that
28 probably bein' a record. [recorder clicking]
29
30 Cheryl McQuaid: [42:48] Sam, why do you think that the vending businesses did well in the f-,
31 Plant?
32
33 Samuel Warren: I think, uh, because of the convenience, uh, a lotta vendors did well, and, and
34 the location was played a part too, just like in any business, ya know, in a
35 community. [background noises] A lotta times, uh, you were guaranteed
36 almost to get somethin' from a vendor, independent vendor versus a machine.
37 You could go there and it could be out, the machine could be out of order, all
38 those type a things, and, uh, there was a honor system where if you didn't
39 have the money, if you didn't have change. So, uh, there was a, a lotta good
40 things that contributed to, uh, those guys doin' and girls doin' well, including
41 myself.
42
43 Cheryl McQuaid: [43:48] Did you ever play in the check pools or any of the gambling that went
44 on in the Plant? [papers rustling]
45

1 Samuel Warren: Yes, uh, I think most people participated in the check pools and, and, uh,
2 some a the other games that they had, but I always tell people now when they
3 ask me [papers rustling] “Do you wanna get in a football pool?” or get in
4 some type a pool, workin’ in that place for over 30 years, I’ve probably won 1
5 football pool and maybe 1 check pool, so I haven’t been the luckiest person in
6 that regard, but, uh, it sure was fun. [tapping]
7

8 Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter.
9

10 Marilyn Coulter: [44:34] Um, Sam, when you were working in the Body Shop and working in
11 Trim Shop, did you ever see any pranks on the people and did you ever pull
12 any pranks or did you have any new hiring initiations or anything like that?
13

14 Samuel Warren: Yeah, we’ve seen pranks pulled, but we haven’t pulled any our, ourselves. I
15 wasn’t, I’m not that type of [coughing] person. I don’t like pranks pulled, I
16 don’t like surprises and that type thing, but I’ve seen a lotta people, uh, do
17 things that I didn’t even think was funny, you know, and, uh, at some times I
18 expressed that, “Hey, you shouldn’t do that,” but you just have some
19 pranksters. And, uh, another thing that amazed me in the Plant, and, uh, you
20 all probably know people that they can tell ya 15 jokes in one minutes, and
21 they have memories like crazy where they remember jokes and they always
22 got a joke for you. I’m not very good at remembering and telling jokes, so.
23

24 Marilyn Coulter: [45:44] Sam, do you remember when one of your happiest moments was in
25 the Plant?
26

27 Samuel Warren: [background conversation] Uh, recently, when I got my, uh, 30-year award.
28 [laughter]
29

30 Marilyn Coulter: [45:55] And what was that?
31

32 Samuel Warren: Uh, it was an award. [door closing] Actually, it was a certificate. So it was a
33 paper certificate sayin’ ya got 30 years. I felt, uh, some freedom and options
34 that I had.
35

36 Marilyn Coulter: [46:14] So Sam – well, it’s Marilyn Coulter – Sam, um, you’ve been there for
37 30 years. In your 30 years, what were [car engine] some of the biggest
38 changes that you noticed inside [chair squeaking] Fisher Body, Lansing?
39 [chair squeaking]
40

41 Samuel Warren: If I could answer the, uh, go back to the question before this?
42

43 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
44

45 Samuel Warren: So, the happiest – after I got involved [door closing] in the union, uh, I had
46 some of my happiest moments bein’ involved in the union, uh, and bein’ a

1 GM employee and a UAW, uh, member and, uh, even a, uh, UAW
2 Representative. I've had so many happy moments, I couldn't begin to tell ya,
3 but, uh, and, and I've been the type of person that I would try to, even in a
4 work situation, kinda make, uh, that a party or [laughter] make it fun at work,
5 ya know?
6

7Marilyn Coulter: [47:09] So you said when you got involved with the union. When did you get
8 involved and how and why did you get involved in the union?
9

10Samuel Warren: Actually, uh, uh, I have to thank my beautiful wife for bringin' that to my
11 attention. Uh, she had got involved in the union, and it was probably around
12 '71 – I mean, not '71 – '91, pardon me, and, uh, she was starting to get
13 involved and, and, uh, she was going to go to a conference, she knew about a
14 conference called Black Men in Union and she asked me to inquire about it,
15 ya know? She thought there was a chance that we might go together or
16 somethin'. So, uh, I had brought it to the powers that be or the appropriate
17 person that I should ask; I would relay it to Marilyn Coulter, to you, and, uh,
18 and I asked you about the conference and you told me, uh, that they had
19 delegates already but you'd consider me, you know, maybe if someone
20 dropped or, or whatnot, and, and, and actually, thanks to you, Marilyn, I got a
21 chance to – and thank 602, uh, uh, leadership and whoever and that played a
22 part in that, I was able to, uh, [car engine] get a chance to go to a very
23 educational, uh, conference that kinda lit a fire in me and I [papers rustling]
24 became involved in our Local 602.
25

26Marilyn Coulter: I'm gonna step away from that. [48:49] Now, is your wife a member of 602?
27

28Samuel Warren: No, my wife's a member of 652.
29

30Marilyn Coulter: Oh, so she works at the sister plant.
31

32Samuel Warren: Yes.
33

34Marilyn Coulter: Okay. And the, do the chase side where they finish off our product.
35

36Samuel Warren: Correct.
37

38Marilyn Coulter: So, you became active. [49:07] Um, did you ever hold any positions in your
39 local?
40

41Samuel Warren: Actually, [clicking] it all started, uh, [car engine] some involvement, from
42 bein' a EPG leader; it kinda gave me a little confidence to, to even come to
43 you and, and, and ask you about goin' to the conference. I think that EPG
44 Leader played a part in me, uh, getting' involved in the, uh, Local 602 also.
45

1Marilyn Coulter: Sam, excuse me. [49:41] For those who, for those who don't know what EPG
2 is, could you please explain what EPG is, stands for?

3

4Samuel Warren: It's, uh, Employee Participation Group, and, uh, we did receive quite a bit of
5 training, uh, in that program. We, uh, did a week's training in Ann Arbor and
6 we did some training, um, in the Plant and some off-sites [tapping] here in
7 Lansing, and it, uh, gave me s-, some confidence and gave me some kind of,
8 uh, [car engine] uh, new skills and whatnot to, uh, to, uh, [tapping] just go
9 forward with, and so that, ya know, all has helped me, ya know, in, in my
10 endeavors with the 602 and the programs that we've been involved with with
11 602.

12

13 My Employee Participation Group, matter a fact, we had to be elected. Uh,
14 during that time, uh, I guess some people might a got the job if nobody else
15 wanted it, but actually I remember winning my first election, uh, I ran for
16 EPG Leader against a fella named [Dwayne Beaucoup 50:53], was very
17 popular in our area, and he was a, an Intermittent Relief Man and, and I pulled
18 a upset and I became the EPG Leader, and I thought that was somethin', uh,
19 big, ya know. [door closing] And so we been, uh, bein' involved in elections
20 with 602, bein' elected to the first, uh, uh, position I ran for was Conservation/
21 Recreational Chairperson, uh, in 1993, and we won that position, but before I,
22 I decided to, uh, run for Conservation/Recreation Chairperson, I had
23 considered, uh, running for Veteran's Chair, but I, I thought I would be better
24 as something, uh, with the fun things, really; fun things and workin' with
25 people. So that's, I guess that was a pretty happy time to win that election too,
26 because you never know.

27

28Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [52:05] Sam, you said that you were involved in Employee
29 Participation Group Leaders. Uh, after coming, hired in in 1969 and working
30 up, up until the 1990s, did you ever think that there would be a time when
31 they would allow employees to get involved [clicking] in the product and the
32 inner workings [clicking] of the Plant like they have? [chair squeaking]

33

34Samuel Warren: No, actually, uh, it seems like we were sorta the first groups [background
35 movement] that were sent to, uh, [background movement] trainings and [door
36 opening] there wasn't talk [background noises] of, uh, uh, I didn't, [chair
37 squeaking] I don't even know if they had joint programs at that, [chair
38 squeaking] at that time. [chair squeaking] I don't know when all a that took
39 place, all the jointness and, uh, [door opening] and, uh, [door closing] the idea
40 of letting employees have more input into their job, that's al-, always been
41 sorta like a, uh, [sniffing] uh, most people, they feel like let's just, uh, just talk
42 and, uh, and then management hasn't really, really, uh, taken that really to
43 heart, but they, ya know, the Main Street School fiasco and everything, um,
44 and people are still wondering right now to this day, [clicking] uh, are, will
45 they really be allowed the input, and, and I think they, ha-, have been, because
46 we have the Early Involvement Program and we have people reporting at the

1 union meeting on how this new plant is gonna allow employees, uh, to have a,
2 uh, firsthand, uh, you know, uh, they, they, they'll be able to have a firsthand,
3 um, should I say, what, uh, the word I'm lookin' for – say, a firsthand say on
4 how this is done and how jobs are setup and [background movement], and
5 how they [background noises] gonna go forward with the new product. So I
6 think it's all good.
7

8Marilyn Coulter: [54:11] S-, how do you feel that these programs, even with the Main Street
9 School training, [car engine] how do you think or do you think they've
10 affected, um, the workers in the Plant? [car engine] On how we work in our
11 day-to-day activities.
12

13Samuel Warren: [chair squeaking] I think even though people, uh, don't necessarily [papers
14 rustling] believe in management so much they believe in themselves, and they
15 know that they, uh, have abilities and, and the desire to make General Motors
16 the best product, ever since I've been working, uh, for GM, and [papers
17 rustling] throughout my career, I've seen people build cars over there with
18 pride no matter how much support we got from management and whatnot, and
19 it's, it [car engine] show-...
20

21Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
22

23Samuel Warren: ...it's showing to this day and it's probably we're gonna, why, uh, [car engine]
24 we have the new products [throat clearing] in the Plant; uh, because of people
25 building car-, quality cars and buildin' with pride...
26

27Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
28

29Samuel Warren: ...and havin' a, always havin' a somewhat mistrust of management and what
30 management says and what management allows them to do, they still continue
31 to, uh, do their best.
32

33Marilyn Coulter: [55:33] I'm gonna – and I'm sorry for jumpin' back here, but as the
34 Recreation Chairperson, how did what you did as a Chair-, what were some a
35 the programs that you did and how did you effect the working lives of the
36 employees?
37

38Samuel Warren: Well, uh, after [banging] being, uh, elected Chair of the
39 Conservation/Recreation Committee, I was, I'll never forget, uh, [Rudy Reyes
40 56:02] told me, "You get to pick your committee." Well, I didn't know.
41 [laughter] "What do you mean?" "Well, just to try to get some people that you
42 can work with and some people that's loyal to you and, and people that wanna
43 serve the membership like you do."
44

45 And so, uh, I have to say, uh, the things I did, they were done because I had a
46 great team. I always had great people to work with and, uh, we tried to stay

1 focused on [door opening] the things that we did and, uh, the, the joy of it all
2 [background movement] was that we connected with [door closing] people
3 [door closing] at work and we connected with people outside a work, [rattling]
4 and that was always, uh, uh, uh, the great reward [background noises], and
5 this is [background noises]; you know, [background noises] gettin' to work
6 with people, you get to, uh, [background noises] meet their families, you get
7 to [background noises] – whether it be father and mother or whether it's their
8 children, [background noises] [banging] brother and sister, and then
9 opportunity to, to meet people, and sometimes people, they need, uh, releases,
10 ya know, after spendin' that stressful week in the Plant, uh, you, you know at
11 the end of the week you're goin' to see the Lions or you're goin' to, uh, see
12 the Tigers, or you're gonna play golf or whatever, and, uh, to be able to know
13 that you're connecting in the Plant and also connecting outside a the Plant
14 with people, I think, uh, people need those type a activities.
15

16Marilyn Coulter: [57:37] Did you see your brothers and, your coworkers as your brothers and
17 sisters?
18

19Samuel Warren: Oh definitely. [background noises] Definitely.
20

21Marilyn Coulter: [57:45] Were there any relationships that you developed inside the Plant that
22 went outside of the Plant where you spend time away from the Shop together?
23

24Samuel Warren: Oh yes. I [coughing] remember [coughing] one a the first persons that I put on
25 my committee was a, uh, uh, lady I worked with, and we had a very good
26 workin' relationship and [car engine] we had things in common and, uh, and,
27 uh, I thought she was a great lady. She, she lost her husband, uh, early and,
28 uh, after bein' married, her name's [Annie May 58:21], and [Annie May] was
29 the first person I put on my [car engine] committee, and [Annie] was such a
30 sweet person, I started, uh, buildin' my committee around her and I said if
31 she's such a great person, I even picked a couple of her good friends to be on,
32 on, on our committee, and, uh, me and [Annie, Annie] and I, we were so, uh, I
33 guess, tight at work that she became tight with my wife [papers rustling] and
34 they became, [papers rustling] they started going, uh, golfing together, they,
35 they were going to the spa together, and so, you know, it, uh, it was a great
36 relationship at work and outside a [coughing] work and it [coughing] extended
37 [coughing] beyond that; it extended to, uh, her becoming, as I said, friends
38 with my wife, me pickin', uh, other people that was friends with her, so we
39 became [coughing] like brothers and [coughing] sisters and, and a small
40 family. So that's, uh, sorta how [car engine] it all got [car engine] started.
41

42Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. [59:22] Sam, you mentioned that you received your 30-year
43 certificate recently. [car engine] Are you going [car engine] to be going to the
44 [car engine] new plant? [car engine]
45

1 Samuel Warren: Actually, I [car engine] received, uh, [car engine] my certificate, uh, a few
2 years ago, because I have over 30 years, as you know, uh, and when they did
3 bring the information and the options, uh, for people to, uh, [paper rustling] to
4 fill out, uh, before the Plant closed, I chose the option of, uh, [background
5 conversation] I plan to retire and not go to the new plant, and I went into the
6 jobs bank. That was a option that was more appealing to me, and so that's
7 what I'm doing; now I'm in the jobs bank and, uh, I don't plan on goin' to the
8 new plant.
9

10 Cheryl McQuaid: [60:16] Sam, are there – is there anything that we've not asked you that you
11 would like to talk to us about? [car engine]
12

13 Samuel Warren: Sh-, um, there's a lotta things I could talk about. I could, uh, one thing that I'd
14 like to talk about, I guess, is, uh, the opportunities that people have, not only
15 myself but anyone who works in that Plant, has, uh, we, uh, I used to, uh,
16 experience sometimes people that would come up with insensitive uh, uh,
17 maybe a joke or, or, uh, or a statement or somethin' and, and all the things that
18 I've learned about bein' around people, I would tell them I, there was a time
19 I'd get mad, and, uh, but in recent times, I would tell them that "I'm, I, I'm
20 not mad at you for doin' that or sayin' it, but I'm disappointed in you."
21

22 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
23

24 Samuel Warren: And I said, "Here you are comin' to a University of Fisher Body every day
25 where you can learn diversity, communication, sociology, and everything. I
26 know you live in a small town, uh, and you're livin' in a small world maybe,
27 but here's a chance to come down here every day. Shame on you if you're
28 comin' to school here at the University of Fisher Body and don't learn
29 somethin'..."
30

31 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
32

33 Samuel Warren: ...and take it back." I can see if you stayin' in Shepherd all your life or
34 wherever, you know, but here, we have a chance to...
35

36 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
37

38 Samuel Warren: ...and, and if someone, uh, got on my nerves or, uh, pissed me off, I wasn't the
39 kind that would shun'm and say "I'm not gonna be bothered with this person;"
40 I would just keep communication and communicating with them, and I've
41 gained some create friends in there of all different cultures and backgrounds
42 just by communicating and expressing myself that kinda way, [car engine] and
43 that's, that's one of the things I, I'm kinda proud about and happy about. I've,
44 uh, met a lotta people where we started off rough and we were able to s-, in
45 some cases, I said we caught big fish bein' involved in the union because I
46 was spreading, uh, the word to, uh, try to get people involved and get'm to the

1 union meetings and whatnot, and some a these persons might be, uh, not anti-
2 union or maybe really negative toward the union and, and I just kept on bein'
3 persistent, and I would see them at some of our events now and whatnot, so
4 it's like...

5

6Marilyn Coulter: Mm.

7

8Samuel Warren: ...ya know, tryin' to always reach out and bring somebody in and, uh, not give
9 up on people.

10

11Marilyn Coulter: Uh.

12

13Cheryl McQuaid: Jerri Smith.

14

15Jerri Smith: Yes. [63:07] Sam, we've had where we've talked to other people about having
16 music and stuff like that in the Plant, and I hear that you play a mean guitar
17 and – well, in fact, I've heard you before. Can you talk about have you done
18 this in the Plant with other people? [Inaudible 63:22] or by yourself or
19 whatever?

20

21Samuel Warren: That takes me back to another, uh, [car engine] great day I had at work. I
22 won't beli-, uh, I can't believe I took my guitar in, in the Plant, and I actually
23 played the guitar for a young lady up on the line, and she was havin' a bad
24 time in her life and I dedicated a song to her and she actually, uh, she had
25 tears and, uh, [throat clearing] and it was just, uh, [background movement]
26 uplifting to her that someone would take the time and, and pay attention to her
27 and, and like I said, she was goin' through a hard time and, and, uh, and she
28 thought that was pretty neat.

29

30 And also, the times that [background movement] [Lyle Birchan 64:07] would
31 come to, he would just run into me by accident a lotta times and, and he was
32 always ready to play and, and as you all know, Lyle plays harmonica, and he
33 can pull a harmonica [clicking] out at any time, a lotta times in any key, and
34 do a impromptu performance so, or entertain right there on the line and, and,
35 uh, I wouldn't have my guitar, but we'd sing and he'd play the harmonica. So
36 there's been some great times like that, right on the spot at work, and a lotta
37 people thought it was great, and you'd see some people were just sittin'
38 [background noises] [inaudible 64:47] would say, "Oh," [background
39 conversation] that [banging] you probably don't need to do that here on the
40 line," but most people thought it was great and, and I really enjoyed that.
41 Actually, uh, bein' in the bank is allowing me [rattling] to pursue my musical,
42 uh, a, a, uh, Associate's [rattling] Degree in music, [rattling] and that's what
43 I'm doing right now; I'm going to LCC and, uh, tryin' to pursue, uh, a music
44 degree.

45

1 Marilyn Coulter: [65:19] Um, Sam, you are pursue – Marilyn Coulter – you are pursuing a
2 music degree, but, uh, while you were working, you were like workin’ on the
3 line by day and you p-, you, you were actually performing in different groups
4 around the community for quite a few years. Is that not correct?
5

6 Samuel Warren: Yeah, that’s true. And, uh, I have another great story. [laughter] Actually, uh,
7 around about 1977 is when I had, well, I started a band in ’76, and so we
8 played and practiced for a year, and I was goin’ to LCC, uh, takin’ a few
9 music classes back then, [chair squeaking] and, uh, and when they asked me
10 to go on Supervision, I had stars in my eyes. I thought, “I’m a supervisor.
11 They work swing shifts. You’re on, on nights 3 months and back on days, and
12 that was gonna hinder my school as well as me p-, performing. I’m on my
13 way to Hollywood,” [laughter] or somewhere, you know, just bein’ in a band,
14 and so, uh, we, we did that for many years, and after practicing for about a
15 year, actually, uh, Marilyn, your dad, [Bob Coulter 66:34], gave us our first
16 gig outta the basement.
17

18 Uh, we, uh, he let us, uh, signed us up to play at a [chair squeaking] club
19 called L’s Club out on South [tapping] Martin Luther King. I don’t know if
20 y’all know where that is. But, uh, we weren’t, weren’t that good, but Bob, he
21 allowed us to play there every Friday and, and Saturday for a while, uh, when
22 we had a chance to, and, uh, believe it or not, our popularity grew and, uh, we
23 started playin’ for some bigger and better functions, but we always enjoyed
24 comin’ back to the L’s and I really, uh, I really thank Bob and his heart, and I,
25 uh, thank Marilyn, also, because he, he’s the one that, uh, gave us our first
26 chance. And I s-, I enjoy music, and, uh, that’s what I plan to, uh, be involved
27 in when I retire.
28

29 Marilyn Coulter: Excellent.
30

31 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. [67:37] Sam, you sang us a little song about Fisher Body
32 before we started this interview. Can you share that with us?
33

34 Samuel Warren: Uh, sure. I don’t think I actually sang; I think that was a rap, and you’re
35 probably wonderin’ why is a old cat like me with a 55 on his shirt – and that is
36 my age, give or take a couple years – but, uh, that rap. But rap used to, uh, rap
37 came out durin’ my time; Curtis Blow and the Sugar Hill Gang, you might a
38 heard some a those groups, but [chair squeaking] basically [chair squeaking] I
39 rapped. I could say those words back to ya, but, uh, if ya wanted me to.
40

41 Cheryl McQuaid: I want you to.
42

43 Samuel Warren: I’m not a rapper, but, uh, I do think I’m, uh, somewhat of a songwriter and,
44 uh, and a poet. Uh, I did say, basically – and I used to tell people this in the
45 Plant when they’d ask where you from and when did you get hired, the same
46 thing we went through today. Basically, how it all started was: I was born in

1 Paris and raised in Rome; I moved to Lansing, made it my home; I stopped at
2 Fischer Body, got job; 'cause I wanted to work, didn't wanna rob; when ya
3 look at me, ya see I'm lookin' good; and I thought I on my way to Hollywood;
4 when I get Hollywood, you'll know one thing; I got there 'cause I got my
5 bang, bang, bang. [laughter] And that's it. [laughter]
6
7Marilyn Coulter: Thank you, Sam.
8
9Jerri Smith: Thank you.
10
11Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you very much.
12
13Samuel Warren: Thank, thank you. [laughter]
14
15
16/rt