

**Dick Trierweiler discusses his career
at REO Motor Car Company and Diamond REO Trucks, Inc. 5/4/2004**

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5 Shirley Bradley: This is Shirley Bradley and Dick Trierweiler. We're at the R.E. Olds
6 Museum and it's May 4th, 5th?
7
8 Dick Trierweiler: It's the 4th [inaudible 0:13].
9
10 Shirley Bradley: It's the 4th I think. [chuckle] And we're going to be talking about Dick's
11 memories of the REO Motor Car Company. Well, first what I'm going to
12 do is just get your own background.
13
14 Dick Trierweiler: Mm-hm.
15
16 Shirley Bradley: [0:27] Uh, were you born and raised in Lansing?
17
18 Dick Trierweiler: No. Near Westphalia, between Westphalia and Portland I was raised
19 there.
20
21 Shirley Bradley: Oh. [0:34] On a farm maybe?
22
23 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
24
25 Shirley Bradley: Good farming country over there.
26
27 Dick Trierweiler: Oh yeah. Very good.
28
29 Shirley Bradley: So many of the people that worked at REO also farmed.
30
31 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
32
33 Shirley Bradley: Came from farming families.
34
35 Dick Trierweiler: Sure.
36
37 Shirley Bradley: I think that's where you, where people learned how to work.
38
39 Dick Trierweiler: Probably.
40
41 Shirley Bradley: [0:48] So, uh, you went to school over there?
42
43 Dick Trierweiler: Westphalia and then I went later on I graduated from St. Pat's in Portland,
44 Michigan.
45
46 Shirley Bradley: Oh sure. [0:56] And where did you go from there?

1
2 Dick Trierweiler: I went, actually, I went in the army, got married and went in the army.
3 And it was one of the 6-month deals that I had signed up for and I got
4 honors there. I got the highest proficiency test out of 150 guys.
5
6 Shirley Bradley: Wow.
7
8 Dick Trierweiler: And, uh, and I did not re-up for active duty. [chuckle] I stayed in with the
9 Guard or the Reserves at that time. So then, after that, I worked for a
10 Dodge Plymouth dealer for a while, a Chrysler dealer, and then I
11 eventually went to work for Diamond REO.
12
13 Shirley Bradley: Oh.
14
15 Dick Trierweiler: It was REO.
16
17 Shirley Bradley: That was going to be my next question. [1:39] When did you go there and
18 why did you go there?
19
20 Dick Trierweiler: Well, I went to REO because I was laid off from the current job that I was
21 with at TRW. At that time I was working for them for about 6 months and
22 then the work slowed up so they laid me off. I didn't have anything to, to
23 do, you know. I needed a job. I was married, so.
24
25 Shirley Bradley: Sure.
26
27 Dick Trierweiler: My brother worked at REO in, in engineering so I asked if they had any
28 and he said, well, come, come and check anyway. So I went in the
29 personnel department and found they needed repairmen, which I did repair
30 so they sent me down on the repair floor for about the next 6 years.
31
32 Shirley Bradley: So you were in the repair department. [2:19] What kind of things were
33 you repairing?
34
35 Dick Trierweiler: The trucks they needed various repairs as they came off the assembly line.
36 There was 150 of us guys that did repairs.
37
38 Shirley Bradley: Oh.
39
40 Dick Trierweiler: I worked for a period of time on military trucks and then after that on
41 commercial trucks.
42
43 Shirley Bradley: [2:37] What sort of repairs? If something had gotten broken during, on the
44 production line?
45
46 Dick Trierweiler: Sometimes the parts didn't get put on too.

1
2 Shirley Bradley: Oh. [chuckle]
3
4 Dick Trierweiler: I got to do that and they called us repairmen and [throat clearing] once in a
5 while it would be a transmission or something that had a problem. They'd
6 have to pull it out and put a new one in but a lot of it had to do with
7 putting parts on that didn't get put on.
8
9 Shirley Bradley: Hm.
10
11 Dick Trierweiler: Some of which hadn't even been engineered yet and so we'd have to do a
12 little of our own engineering.
13
14 Shirley Bradley: [3:04] Is that right?
15
16 Dick Trierweiler: Exhaust systems, I made a lot of exhaust systems. I didn't physically
17 make the exhaust but I told the welder how to, where to put the exhaust,
18 you know, where to weld it, tell him that, and then I would put, assemble
19 it then at that time, so.
20
21 Shirley Bradley: So you were an engineer, really.
22
23 Dick Trierweiler: Sometimes we were, yes.
24
25 Shirley Bradley: Yeah.
26
27 Dick Trierweiler: Sometimes.
28
29 Shirley Bradley: [3:24] And then when you finished the job, it went back to an inspection
30 or something?
31
32 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. It went – I was a road tester for Diamond REO. I road tested their
33 trucks.
34
35 Shirley Bradley: [3:32] You did?
36
37 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
38
39 Shirley Bradley: Oh.
40
41 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. There was about 5 of us road testers and we eventually [throat
42 clearing] White Motor Company owned us by that time.
43
44 Shirley Bradley: Hm.
45

1 Dick Trierweiler: And they were after our president about quality control so he put all of us
2 guys on what he called the audit team [throat clearing] and we answered
3 directly to him. He was our only boss at that time and he told us not to
4 road test any trucks, not to let any trucks get out that weren't absolutely
5 perfect, so that's what we did.
6

7 Shirley Bradley: [4:08] So did that, that was kind of time consuming making sure that
8 everything was...?
9

10 Dick Trierweiler: Well, yes, it was because there's times that production people didn't have
11 things in perfect condition and so we'd have to just tell'm you can't ship
12 that truck until it is, so. But when I was road testing trucks I remember a
13 magazine by the name of Overdrive, they came out to, to, you know,
14 check our quality 'cause our, our managers wanted, management wanted,
15 you know, some publicity.
16

17 Shirley Bradley: Oh.

18

19 Dick Trierweiler: [throat clearing] And so they sent, Overdrive magazine sent a guy out and
20 they chose me to be the guy to ride with and to check and see what we did.
21 And it's kind of interesting because they took off with this truck and I did
22 my usual [inaudible 5:02] truck and write up whatever I saw wrong and
23 then I'd stop again part of the way through. And we got up on 96 and I
24 got it up to about 70 miles an hour rolling along and all of a sudden I look
25 and antifreeze was going out the back like crazy and we blew a radiator
26 hose. [throat clearing] And I said to the guy, I says we're not going to
27 make it back with this truck and he said why. I said we just blew a
28 radiator hose and he looked over at the temperature gauge and, of course,
29 it hadn't even started going up yet. I already spotted it, shut it off, got it
30 off to the side before it got over, you know, overheated or anything.
31

32 Shirley Bradley: Sure.

33

34 Dick Trierweiler: And I said, well, he said what do we do now? I said we'll wait for the
35 next road tester to come along and we'll take a ride back [laughter] and
36 they'll call a wrecker to come and get this truck and...
37

38 Shirley Bradley: [5:44] REO had their own wreckers?

39

40 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah, we had a couple wreckers, well, mainly 1 just, you know, for
41 hauling vehicles in and out if there was some kind of a problem.
42

43 Shirley Bradley: Oh, I see.

44

45 Dick Trierweiler: And I, I had to think fast when I was, you know, I'm with this guy and
46 he's [inaudible 5:58] this is the reason why we got the quality control we

1 do because we road test them and if they aren't ready for the customer and
2 this one wasn't ready yet and we caught it before it got to the customer.
3
4 Shirley Bradley: [6:12] Really, in a way, that was fortuitous wasn't it?
5
6 Dick Trierweiler: Yes, it was.
7
8 Shirley Bradley: He really got the picture instead of everything being rosy.
9
10 Dick Trierweiler: He wrote it up that way too in the Overdrive magazine.
11
12 Shirley Bradley: Really?
13
14 Dick Trierweiler: He kind of wrote it up.
15
16 Shirley Bradley: [6:21] Have you got a copy of that magazine? Did they...?
17
18 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. It's somewhere [inaudible 6:23] at home.
19
20 Shirley Bradley: Oh, I just wondered if they gave you a...
21
22 Dick Trierweiler: Sure, sure, I have a copy of it.
23
24 Shirley Bradley: Great.
25
26 Dick Trierweiler: And that was, that was a fun place to work. I did a lot of fun things.
27
28 Shirley Bradley: [6:33] Like?
29
30 Dick Trierweiler: Well, one time I was road testing a military truck and [throat clearing] I
31 got out by 96th and Martin Luther King now.
32
33 Shirley Bradley: Uh-huh.
34
35 Dick Trierweiler: And I stopped underneath the viaduct to write up some items that I had
36 found wrong on the, on the road test and all of a sudden in the mirror I
37 caught this thing whizzing by back and forth and here was a mother duck
38 going back and forth at about car level and I thought that ridiculous duck
39 is going to get killed. I kept watching and finally I got out and I was
40 wondering what it was so concerned about and I walk back and here in
41 one of these big manholes there was a grate, grates, you know, big enough
42 and the mother duck went and 12 of her babies fell through the holes into
43 this manhole.
44
45 Shirley Bradley: Oh, her family.
46

1 Dick Trierweiler: I know, the whole family, so she was literally upset. She was running
2 back and forth. There was water on both, at least on the one side of
3 Martin Luther King and so another road tester pulled up and I said, you
4 know, we ought to try and do something about this. [throat clearing] So
5 he went to a gas station down the street and got a crowbar. [inaudible
6 7:41] crowbar and we pried that thing open. [phone ringing] Luckily, the
7 manhole didn't have a lot of water in it or anything so I said every time I'd
8 go to try and get the little ducks they'd run away from me, you know,
9 down into the hole a little farther. And the mother duck is going zoom
10 back and forth. What are you doing to my babies? And next thing you
11 know here was a cop and here was the State Journal and everybody was
12 out there.
13

14 Shirley Bradley: Really?

15

16 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. And so I told the cop, I says, I said I want to dive into that hole
17 'cause I said the only way they're going to, I'm not going to be able to
18 get'm really easily and so I says I'll go quack, quack, quack, and I did and
19 they'd come running up and I said you catch [inaudible 8:22] and I dove in
20 and I'd get 4 or 5 at a time or 3 or whatever and I'd take'm over to their
21 mother and the mother she was [inaudible 8:29] back and forth and then
22 the cop went in once. He tried, yeah.
23

24 Shirley Bradley: He did? [chuckle]

25

26 Dick Trierweiler: So we had a whole bunch of us [inaudible 8:36].

27

28 Shirley Bradley: Oh, that's marvelous.

29

30 Dick Trierweiler: I think the managers probably thought, oh boy, he must have rolled this
31 one over or something.
32

33 Shirley Bradley: 'Cause he hasn't come back, he hasn't come back.

34

35 Dick Trierweiler: He hasn't come back. [laughter] Now what did he do?

36

37 Shirley Bradley: And no cellphones then.

38

39 Dick Trierweiler: No cellphones.

40

41 Shirley Bradley: No. So you couldn't let'm know I'm out here rescuing a family.

42

43 Dick Trierweiler: No. But we had a big article in the paper about it, yeah. They showed
44 pictures of all us out there.
45

46 Shirley Bradley: [8:58] Oh, about when would that have been do you think?

1
2 Dick Trierweiler: '64 I think it was.
3
4 Shirley Bradley: '64?
5
6 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
7
8 Shirley Bradley: Oh my. That's, that's fun. [laughter] So you had stories to tell.
9
10 Dick Trierweiler: There were a lot of things that happened like that that were fun.
11
12 Shirley Bradley: Oh, you bet.
13
14 Dick Trierweiler: And another thing about road testing that was fun is that I would, I went to
15 community college. I decided I would go to community college, try to
16 upgrade my education and, and job and everything else, so while I was
17 road testing trucks, you know, there's times I could stop and there was
18 times when there wasn't trucks to road test.
19
20 Shirley Bradley: Oh, so you had some downtime.
21
22 Dick Trierweiler: And because I was in the union they wouldn't let you do anything else.
23
24 Shirley Bradley: Oh, I see.
25
26 Dick Trierweiler: You had to sit there and wait, so I'd study then. And I had a speech class,
27 you know, you always have to have a speech class and I'm road testing
28 this truck and I'm giving myself this speech that I'm going to give, you
29 know, people go by and they look up at me like I think I'm going to get
30 out of here, this guy is crazy. [laughter]
31
32 Shirley Bradley: He's talking to himself.
33
34 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
35
36 Shirley Bradley: [9:58] So you got a degree from LCC?
37
38 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
39
40 Shirley Bradley: In?
41
42 Dick Trierweiler: An associate degree.
43
44 Shirley Bradley: Social degree, uh-huh.
45
46 Dick Trierweiler: Associate, yeah. It was...

1
2 Shirley Bradley: Associate, I'm sorry.
3
4 Dick Trierweiler: ...supposed to be industrial engineering but I missed 1 physics class and
5 that's when Diamond REO – I actually graduated with a general and
6 Diamond REO then decided that they wanted to have me in management
7 and so I [inaudible 10:21] service department [inaudible 10:23] technical
8 service manager.
9
10 Shirley Bradley: Oh. [10:26] Now what does a technical service manager do?
11
12 Dick Trierweiler: Well, actually, a technical service representative at that time.
13
14 Shirley Bradley: Oh, representative.
15
16 Dick Trierweiler: And that was the most interesting job of all [inaudible 10:34].
17
18 Shirley Bradley: [10:34] Really? Why?
19
20 Dick Trierweiler: Well, [inaudible 10:36] I'm just that kind of person. I'm getting tons of
21 calls from the field from either customers or dealers and they'd always
22 have a problem that they needed solved and I would go and have to solve
23 that problem for them. That was just right up my alley. That's the kind of
24 thing I just love to do and so and the other thing of it is everybody in the
25 plant, Engineering, Quality Control, were so cooperative. I'd go in, if I
26 went to Engineering and said, hey, I got this problem, what can I do? You
27 know, they would work with me. They'd drop whatever they're doing.
28 They got to fix the customer, that's always...
29
30 Shirley Bradley: Really?
31
32 Dick Trierweiler: This is a truck that's running or not running, you know, and they said we
33 got to, we got to take care of this customer so they would bend over
34 backwards to help me. We'd get prints out, you know, and the engineers
35 would help me, you know, this way and that way and so it was really a lot
36 of fun because it's really nice to make somebody at the other end of the
37 line feel good that they got their problem resolved.
38
39 Shirley Bradley: And you would feel like you've done a good job.
40
41 Dick Trierweiler: Oh yeah. I'd be very, very...
42
43 Shirley Bradley: Satisfying.
44
45 Dick Trierweiler: It's a sense of accomplishment, yeah. Very enjoyable.
46

1 Shirley Bradley: People from all over that had bought a truck.
2
3 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
4
5 Shirley Bradley: Companies.
6
7 Dick Trierweiler: Or dealers, you know, sometimes dealers would call that have a truck in
8 the shop and, well, like one guy, I'll never forget some of these garbage
9 haulers, which we sold a lot of trucks to garbage haulers out...
10
11 Shirley Bradley: [11:53] Oh, did you?
12
13 Dick Trierweiler: ...out in the East Coast area and...
14
15 Shirley Bradley: [11:57] Where? I'm sorry.
16
17 Dick Trierweiler: East Coast.
18
19 Shirley Bradley: Oh, in the East Coast.
20
21 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah, like New York, New Jersey, through there. [throat clearing] Well,
22 this one guy kept going through alternators and they'd just fail and they
23 would come apart and fail and so I talked with him, the dealer, at length
24 and I said, well, you know, [throat clearing] this guy revs this engine up a
25 lot at a slow speed and he's not going to need to have, worry about going
26 down the road, he's just going to go short runs here and there I said. And
27 that alternator was [inaudible 12:26] usage that we had. We hadn't
28 produced that alternator a lot. I think [inaudible 12:30] alternator if I
29 remember right.
30
31 And, uh, [throat clearing] so I told the dealer, I says, you know, why
32 couldn't we put a bigger pulley on that and slow that, that alternator down
33 a little bit and that way the alternator would probably live a lot longer and
34 the battery [inaudible 12:49] go down because he's always got it revved
35 up enough in between and so he said [inaudible 12:55] good so I went and
36 got prints, all the different prints of the different alternators so I could
37 check the size, you know, diameter inside for the shaft, for the outside and
38 the belt, the sheaves on the belt and the size of the belt that it would take
39 and I came up with one and, uh, I sent it to the guy and they took it and
40 they never had alternator failures after that, so things like that really make
41 you feel good. You did, did some good and helped some people.
42
43 Shirley Bradley: [13:23] Would that become standard then for trucks that are having that
44 kind of usage?
45
46 Dick Trierweiler: No, not necessarily.

1
2 Shirley Bradley: No. That was just a special case.
3
4 Dick Trierweiler: Not necessarily. But I was, you know, I would tell the engineers about
5 what I did.
6
7 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.
8
9 Dick Trierweiler: And then I'd just leave it up to them to decide whether they...
10
11 Shirley Bradley: To decide what to do.
12
13 Dick Trierweiler: ...what they should do about the trucks, future trucks. Sometimes they
14 would take [inaudible 13:42] I put on and would adopt them but
15 sometimes they wouldn't for whatever reason.
16
17 Shirley Bradley: [13:49] Isn't that nice that it was a cooperative area?
18
19 Dick Trierweiler: Oh. That was the best part of all.
20
21 Shirley Bradley: I think that was special in REO.
22
23 Dick Trierweiler: It was, they, if, if there was a customer out there that had a problem, I
24 don't care, they were there to help him. Uh, one of the presidents of the
25 company asked me to chair a committee and it was a like a quality control
26 committee.
27
28 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.
29
30 Dick Trierweiler: And I, I was pretty naïve at the time I thought. Anyway, here I had the
31 head engineer on my committee, I had the head, uh, uh, quality control
32 guy, the head purchaser, all the heads from all the departments in my
33 committee.
34
35 Shirley Bradley: Wow.
36
37 Dick Trierweiler: And I would bring the complaints from the field and we'd sit down and
38 discuss those complaints and, you know, I'd just say here's a problem, you
39 know, who wants to take and research this to see what, what's best to do.
40 Boy, they would just all volunteer, just like that. I wouldn't have to tell
41 anybody to do anything. They would just volunteer and take it and do it.
42 And I'd write the minutes up for the whole thing, this was a weekly
43 meeting. So it was a pleasure to work there. I got such an education
44 myself.
45
46 Shirley Bradley: [14:58] Did you?

1
2 Dick Trierweiler: Oh, tremendous. I was 20 years old when I started there.
3
4 Shirley Bradley: I was going to ask you that.
5
6 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
7
8 Shirley Bradley: You were 20 when you started.
9
10 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. I got just a phenomenal education and I really, really appreciated
11 working for that company.
12
13 Shirley Bradley: [15:13] So about what year did you hire in do you think?
14
15 Dick Trierweiler: '60, 1960.
16
17 Shirley Bradley: 1960.
18
19 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
20
21 Shirley Bradley: [15:18] And you were there until?
22
23 Dick Trierweiler: '75 when they closed the door.
24
25 Shirley Bradley: When they closed the door and put the padlock on.
26
27 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
28
29 Shirley Bradley: [15:25] That wasn't a good day, was it?
30
31 Dick Trierweiler: No. It wasn't a good day for quite a while because you could see the
32 handwriting on the wall.
33
34 Shirley Bradley: Yeah. People lost their pensions and...
35
36 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. And I was lucky. I was 35 years old. I went and got another career
37 after that.
38
39 Shirley Bradley: Oh, you were young enough and you had all this background.
40
41 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
42
43 Shirley Bradley: [15:43] What did you go to from there?
44
45 Dick Trierweiler: I went for 1 year, 1 ½ to service manager at University Olds.
46

1 Shirley Bradley: Oh.
2

3 Dick Trierweiler: GMC.
4

5 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.
6

7 Dick Trierweiler: And that experience must have helped because I applied to GMC Truck as
8 a field representative and they hired me, so I was in the field working out
9 in Wisconsin, traveling the state of Wisconsin as a field service
10 representative engineer, whatever.
11

12 Shirley Bradley: [16:09] So you had to move the family to Wisconsin?
13

14 Dick Trierweiler: Oh yeah. We had to move to, we moved to a nice little town called Port
15 Washington, Wisconsin, beautiful.
16

17 Shirley Bradley: Oh my gosh. I know that town.
18

19 Dick Trierweiler: Do you know it?
20

21 Shirley Bradley: Oh. I was just there.
22

23 Dick Trierweiler: Isn't that a cute, nice, little town.
24

25 Shirley Bradley: Yeah.
26

27 Dick Trierweiler: You got family there?
28

29 Shirley Bradley: No, um, actually. I guess I better shut this off 'cause they won't be
30 interested. [recording paused] So you said that you had a brother that
31 worked at REO.
32

33 Dick Trierweiler: Yes.
34

35 Shirley Bradley: [16:32] Did you have any other relatives that worked there?
36

37 Dick Trierweiler: No. Just my brother Charles and he only worked there for a couple years
38 and then he went to Oldsmobile [inaudible 16:40].
39

40 Shirley Bradley: And he went to Oldsmobile.
41

42 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
43

44 Shirley Bradley: Okay. [16:42] Uh, do you remember in the beginning when you were in
45 there who you worked for in that, what was it, repair department?
46

1 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. Repair floor.
2
3 Shirley Bradley: Who your...
4
5 Dick Trierweiler: Well, the guy that was in charge of the whole thing his name was Vance
6 [Disborough 16:52].
7
8 Shirley Bradley: [Disborough 16:53]?
9
10 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. [Disborough 16:54]. And he's dead now.
11
12 Shirley Bradley: I see.
13
14 Dick Trierweiler: He's gone. But they had a lot of different foremen. I mean it's [inaudible
15 17:01].
16
17 Shirley Bradley: Came and went.
18
19 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. They came and went. There was it seemed like every time we
20 turned around there was a new one. [chuckle]
21
22 Shirley Bradley: So somebody new to adjust to.
23
24 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. Constantly.
25
26 Shirley Bradley: Um. Let's see. [17:15] Oh, I was going to ask you what kind of training
27 you received but I already guess we covered that because you came to
28 REO with the experience of knowing how to...
29
30 Dick Trierweiler: Some, yeah. I mean it wasn't – I, I had worked for an independent garage
31 repair when I started when I was 16 in high school and worked part time
32 for him and he did show me an awful lot of things that I needed to know
33 about repair and stuff and, but then I went from there to another dealer for
34 a couple months before I went in the army, so I didn't have a ton of
35 experience but I had a little bit.
36
37 Shirley Bradley: You had...
38
39 Dick Trierweiler: And then when I went to Diamond REO first and I learned the heavy duty
40 truck business too.
41
42 Shirley Bradley: And they taught you, someone there trained you.
43
44 Dick Trierweiler: Well, we worked with somebody all the time.
45
46 Shirley Bradley: Oh, okay.

1
2 Dick Trierweiler: And you just basically learned how to one way or another do it.
3
4 Shirley Bradley: And if you have an aptitude for it and apparently you do.
5
6 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. That was the good thing.
7
8 Shirley Bradley: Um, let's talk a little about the working conditions, safety-wise, breaks,
9 benefits, that sort of thing. [18:16] You don't recall any shall I say
10 problems with safety equipment or?
11
12 Dick Trierweiler: Not really. Uh, I was never really asked to do anything that was unsafe. I
13 knew of some people that had gotten hurt but, you know, I thought it was
14 fault of their own. One guy got killed as a matter of fact on a set of rolls.
15 He – they were always told, the guys that ran these trucks on the rolls, you
16 know, not to get out of the truck and this guy heard a noise I guess
17 apparently [inaudible 18:48] axle and he got out. He was a real
18 conscientious person and he stepped in between the [inaudible 18:55] and
19 the truck was running 60 miles an hour and...
20
21 Shirley Bradley: Hm.
22
23 Dick Trierweiler: ...the rear tire caught his pant leg or something and took him right through
24 and killed him instantly.
25
26 Shirley Bradley: Oh mercy.
27
28 Dick Trierweiler: That was – I went over to see that and the guy that you're going to
29 interview sometime later, Tom Morefield, he was his buddy.
30
31 Shirley Bradley: Yeah. I'm talking with him tomorrow.
32
33 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
34
35 Shirley Bradley: [19:19] It was a friend of his?
36
37 Dick Trierweiler: Oh yeah. They worked together on the same job.
38
39 Shirley Bradley: Oh dear.
40
41 Dick Trierweiler: So I mean, like I say, I didn't think there was ever any safety issue.
42
43 Shirley Bradley: Okay. [19:30] Um, what about your pay when you went from one
44 department up to the next, did you get pay increase?
45
46 Dick Trierweiler: Oh yes.

1
2 Shirley Bradley: [19:37] Were you on salary or?
3
4 Dick Trierweiler: The only time I was on salary was [inaudible 19:40]. [background voices]
5
6 Shirley Bradley: You were mentioning to me, we were talking about safety issues.
7
8 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. Well, one issue, most of the time it was very safe to work at REO
9 but on the road anything could come up and one time I can remember
10 going to a Brooklyn, New York dealership and while I was there, there
11 was a customer that had a cab bracket break in about a 3-year-old truck
12 and, of course, the truck was only warranted for 1 year at that time.
13
14 Shirley Bradley: Hm.
15
16 Dick Trierweiler: [throat clearing] And this guy was, he was a garbage hauler and very
17 Italian like, and the dealer said, well, could we do anything for him and I
18 said no, the truck is too old and too many miles, you know. And so after a
19 little while I was over in some corner of the dealership looking at
20 something and this guy comes over, the customer comes over to me and he
21 says, say, are you the factory guy? I said yeah. He says, well, that's my
22 truck over there that needs that cab bracket and he says that's going to be a
23 pretty expensive repair. He says don't you think you ought to pay for
24 some of that? And I said, well, no, sir. I said I don't think I can because
25 the truck is way too old, it's way over, you know, [inaudible 21:01] we
26 could consider it. He said, well, and he pulled back his coat and here's a
27 pistol. He says, now he says don't you think you ought to pay for that?
28 And I said, gee, you know, it's pretty old. He said, he said, sir, I'm telling
29 you, don't you think you ought to pay for that? [chuckle] I'm looking at
30 him and I said, well, maybe I ought to pay for the part. [laughter] He said
31 okay, he closed his coat back and he leaves.
32
33 And about half an hour later I'm walking over in another corner of the
34 dealership and he comes over and he says, hey, Mr. Factory Guy, he says I
35 think you ought to pay for the labor. He said that's pretty expensive labor.
36 I said, well, sir, I told you, you know, the truck is out of warranty. He
37 pulled back the other side of his coat and he had a set of bullets. And he
38 pulls it out and he says you ever seen what one of those looks like going
39 through a body? I said no and I don't want to find out either. [chuckle]
40
41 Shirley Bradley: My gosh.
42
43 Dick Trierweiler: And he says now don't you think you ought to pay for the labor? And I
44 said, I had finally thought fast and I said, well sir, I don't have the
45 authority to do that. My boss is the only one that can give the authority to
46 do that. And I said he's not in the office right now. Well, he said, you

1 make sure when you get back you talk to your boss. And he kept looking
2 at this bullet and looking me. You talk to your boss and I want the labor
3 paid for too. I said I'll call, I'll talk to him. So I got back and I said to my
4 boss, I said I think I know what you're going to say, this guy wanted,
5 wanted the bracket and the labor and everything. He said hell no. He said
6 why did you even pay for the damn bracket for? I said, well, he did have a
7 gun that he was showing me after all. [laughter]
8
9 Shirley Bradley: And he might have used it.
10
11 Dick Trierweiler: Well you never know, you know. He might not have used it there but he
12 might have got me going somewhere.
13
14 Shirley Bradley: That's what I'm thinking, once you walk away and you got in the parking
15 lot.
16
17 Dick Trierweiler: I told my boss, I said from now on my expense account to New York is
18 going to be a lot bigger. And he looked at me [inaudible 22:56] why
19 would that be? And I said, well, when I fly in there usually I fly in this 4-
20 engine airplane. I said I'm going to tell them to keep the engines all
21 running. [laughter] I'll be back in a hurry.
22
23 Shirley Bradley: Oh my goodness. [23:13] Was that a garbage hauler's truck?
24
25 Dick Trierweiler: Oh yeah.
26
27 Shirley Bradley: See, those guys are tough, aren't they?
28
29 Dick Trierweiler: They're all mobsters [inaudible 23:18].
30
31 Shirley Bradley: Yeah, yeah. They're organized. And you see them blocking the streets in
32 downtown New York.
33
34 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. Oh yeah.
35
36 Shirley Bradley: And everybody is screaming 'cause they're piled up behind them in their
37 cars and, and they're, they're very independent shall we say.
38
39 Dick Trierweiler: Oh yeah. I can tell you a few other experiences.
40
41 Shirley Bradley: Well, go ahead. That's just fine.
42
43 Dick Trierweiler: Well, this one guy they had a garbage operation about 5 or 6, maybe 7
44 trucks and [throat clearing] I, this was in Hawthorne, New Jersey, and I
45 looked [inaudible 23:47] and they were going through rear-end failures on
46 these trucks like crazy and I went in and looked and here was 6 or 7 laying

1 there on the, on the floor. I took one look at them and I could tell what
2 was wrong right away. They had shock loaded the daylights out of those
3 things and broke those parts, you know, and I knew that wasn't a factory
4 defect of any kind.
5
6 Shirley Bradley: They got broken there?
7
8 Dick Trierweiler: Well, in their operation, you know, they, they're so abusive. It's just
9 unbelievable how abusive they are to those trucks. And so I talked with
10 the dealer and I said, geez, you know, that, that doesn't look like a factory
11 defect to me. And he said, oh, Dick, he said, we got to get this resolved
12 somehow or another. And so [throat clearing] finally the next day I was
13 there, the customer came in, his name was Vito [Spumato 24:38]. He was
14 about this tall and he pointed at me and called me every name in the book.
15 [chuckle] You little something he said, he's looking up at me.
16
17 Shirley Bradley: He's calling you little.
18
19 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. He said that after I said, well, all I said was what about your
20 drivers? That's when he started in on me. And so I said to the dealer after
21 he left, I said, you know, I got to go see this operation and see what
22 they're doing. So all day long he put me off, put me off, [inaudible 25:11]
23 I had to stay overnight again, came back the next morning. I said hey,
24 when are we going to go look at this operation on this truck? And he says
25 [inaudible 25:19] we went out there to the dump site where they dump and
26 he said Dick if you went out there and looked, you wouldn't warrantee
27 anything on those trucks for the rest of their life. He said they're so badly
28 abused.
29
30 I said, well, how about where they pick up, you know. He said I don't
31 know Dick. He didn't want to show me. I said, well, I understand what
32 you're going through. Let's just go look. And sure enough, we went out
33 there and they, they had a brake, a hand brake with the foot brake and
34 what they would do they'd take off with the truck wide open, you know, in
35 low gear or second gear, whatever, and then they would just throw that
36 hand brake down and jump right out of the truck, run back and throw the
37 stuff in. By the time the truck got just to the location where they needed
38 to be, they would be dumping their stuff and that's just, I mean, the brakes
39 they went brake through brake for about every 5000, 6000 miles.
40
41 Shirley Bradley: I would think so.
42
43 Dick Trierweiler: And then, this is ironic, they were telling the dealer [inaudible 26:24]
44 dealer and they said every once in a while around here we hear about a
45 body going in one of these too. And the next place we went to, this guy
46 picked up this whole big thing and threw it in there and the compression

1 came down, red stuff ran out all over the place. I don't know if it was
2 blood or paint but I'll tell you, I said I think I've seen enough. Let's go
3 home. [laughter]
4

5Shirley Bradley: You're very diplomatic and I'll bet you got more cooperation because you
6 are. [laughter]
7

8Dick Trierweiler: Yeah, so. And, you know, the thing about it is you have to understand
9 when you're going to sell trucks to those people, they're going to treat'm
10 whatever way they want to. And the next day they had the guy, the
11 Rockwell representative come in [inaudible 27:09] axle, the axle that had
12 failed. Rockwell they had made those axles so I knew that the dealer said,
13 well, we finally called the Rockwell rep and he's going to come and look
14 at them. So I know how he handled his problem. He drove in. He had his
15 wife with him. He drove up to the front door and had the engine running,
16 walked inside, walked right through, didn't even hardly look. He went
17 through, he said I'll buy'm all. He went right out the door and drove off.
18 [chuckle] I said, well, as long as he said he'll buy'm, I don't care.
19

20Shirley Bradley: Yeah. [27:41] And then he would re-supply them or?
21

22Dick Trierweiler: Well, they would wait until the...
23

24Shirley Bradley: REO.
25

26Dick Trierweiler: ...warranty claim and then Rockwell would reimburse it.
27

28Shirley Bradley: Oh, I see. Rockwell International is that?
29

30Dick Trierweiler: Now it is. Yeah.
31

32Shirley Bradley: Now it is. It wasn't then.
33

34Dick Trierweiler: [inaudible 27:51].
35

36Shirley Bradley: That's interesting.
37

38Dick Trierweiler: That was a challenging, interesting job but I, I traveled to a lot of places
39 all over the country, California. I had a brother in Seattle I hadn't seen in
40 years and so when the representative out there was on vacation for 2
41 weeks they said Dick, go out there and travel his district for a while so I
42 did and I stopped in Seattle to see my brother for a weekend.
43

44Shirley Bradley: Oh, wasn't that wonderful.
45

46Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. It was really fun.

1
2 Shirley Bradley: [Inaudible 28:17].
3
4 Dick Trierweiler: I was tired out though because every day it was go, go, go, traveling, go,
5 go, go and travel but it was still interesting and fun.
6
7 Shirley Bradley: You met a lot of people and...
8
9 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
10
11 Shirley Bradley: ...helped a lot of things get solved and maybe come up with some new
12 solutions...
13
14 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
15
16 Shirley Bradley: ...for problems.
17
18 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. That was the good thing. I mean, that's why I went out. I went out
19 on one job that had a vibration in a truck that was in I think it was in New
20 Jersey or someplace too. And [throat clearing] I went out there and I was
21 out there for a whole week on this vibration problem and didn't get it
22 solved so I flew back home and the next week I went out there I was
23 working with our local representative that was out there at the time too.
24
25 Shirley Bradley: [29:07] With whom?
26
27 Dick Trierweiler: Our local representative that was there.
28
29 Shirley Bradley: Oh, local representative, okay.
30
31 Dick Trierweiler: The regional, John Goga his name is, and between the 2 of us we weren't
32 getting this problem solved and I called the engineers and, and they would
33 tell me what to do this and do that, make these various suggestions. And
34 actually, it went on to the third week and finally I told them, I called my
35 boss, I said well, you know, I don't know if I can get this fixed. And I
36 says, you know, I need to come home pretty soon. [chuckle] And he said,
37 you know, he said, you're getting your first education about what a
38 technical service representative is, it's a person that goes out and finds a
39 way to solve the problem. I don't care what it is or how you go about it,
40 what education you got to have, you find a way to solve the problem. So
41 he said that, that meant I wasn't going to ever get home if I didn't fix this
42 truck. [laughter]
43
44 And so I, I, just you really press your mind hard to come up with solutions
45 and finally one day I said, you know, this truck had a main transmission
46 and it had an auxiliary transmission back here and I told the guy, I says,

1 you know, when I look at this thing after all these weeks since I've been
2 looking at it and I said I'm sick and tired, I want to go home. I said we're
3 going to take that auxiliary transmission, we're going to move it up here
4 and make that angularity of that shaft so there is no angle to it and then the
5 only angle left is on this shaft back here and when I did that it solved the
6 problem just like that.
7

8Shirley Bradley: After all that.
9

10Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. You know, it's amazing how if you press yourself hard enough
11 you'll come up with ways and solutions to, ways and means or you go to
12 the right people or something, you know.
13

14Shirley Bradley: [30:52] What did you say the, because somebody is going to be
15 transcribing this and they won't know what, what you said. The regional
16 representative did you tell me his name?
17

18Dick Trierweiler: John Goga, G-o-g-a.
19

20Shirley Bradley: G-o-g-a.
21

22Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
23

24Shirley Bradley: Oh, okay, okay.
25

26Dick Trierweiler: He was the representative for that district, you know, and I would go up
27 from the, from the factory when they would have problems with solving
28 the problem.
29

30Shirley Bradley: He was someone you could go to.
31

32Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
33

34Shirley Bradley: Um, I think that we have, the rest of my questions you have answered in a
35 very entertaining fashion. Um, I'm saying can you recall any humorous
36 events, well, we have. [chuckle]
37

38Dick Trierweiler: Lots of them.
39

40Shirley Bradley: Problems that you encountered, projects you helped to make. Um, [31:36]
41 your impression of the REO Motor Car Company as you look back.
42

43Dick Trierweiler: I thought it was a great place to work with a lot of great people, very
44 enjoyable place to work really.
45

1 Shirley Bradley: [31:47] And friends you met there perhaps are still ones that are still with
2 us.
3
4 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. [inaudible 31:50] Tom, you know.
5
6 Shirley Bradley: Tom Morefield?
7
8 Dick Trierweiler: Tom came up eventually, you'll find out later, he came up eventually
9 [inaudible 31:55] to work with me.
10
11 Shirley Bradley: [31:57] Oh did he?
12
13 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
14
15 Shirley Bradley: Uh-huh.
16
17 Dick Trierweiler: Toward the end there. And, you know, Kimball, I know Ray very well
18 [inaudible 32:02] factory [inaudible 32:04] all those guys that I worked
19 with out there and, and road testers. And, and they were tied, we were tied
20 in with the other inspectors, checkout inspectors and everybody at the
21 [inaudible 32:15] team too, so.
22
23 Shirley Bradley: Hm, Ray was telling me about the truck that he was told that Ray Jenks
24 told him to take it out and get it stuck.
25
26 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
27
28 Shirley Bradley: And he did and Ray got furious with him because he got it stuck.
29 [laughter]
30
31 Dick Trierweiler: He got it stuck so he couldn't get it out of there for a while.
32
33 Shirley Bradley: So, I know and so he, Ray has kept, this is wonderful, he's kept all kinds
34 of paperwork and pictures and his wife is just the most organized little
35 person, she's a little doll.
36
37 Dick Trierweiler: Mm-hm.
38
39 Shirley Bradley: And she went right off in their little office and she made Xeroxes...
40
41 Dick Trierweiler: Did she?
42
43 Shirley Bradley: ...and they gave me some of'm, uh, as an example. And there's a picture
44 of the truck in the water and there's also, and he went through several,
45 he's got spiral bound notebooks of stuff [inaudible 32:53]. And, uh, I tell
46 you, the man could run our Treasury Department the way he keeps his

1 records. And he came across the original letter or note that Ray read, uh,
2 wrote to him...
3
4 Dick Trierweiler: Wrote to him.
5
6 Shirley Bradley: ...telling him to go out and get it stuck.
7
8 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
9
10 Shirley Bradley: He said and I showed it to him. [chuckle] So I'm having a lot of fun just
11 talking with you guys.
12
13 Dick Trierweiler: Sure.
14
15 Shirley Bradley: [33:15] Um, is there anything else that I hadn't even thought of, I haven't
16 covered, that you'd like to share with anybody? You know, what we're
17 going to do is keep these tapes here and, unless Jim has another place he's
18 going to, but I think they'll all be housed here because the previous ones
19 that Lisa and I did are here so anybody that's wanting to know about REO,
20 about the working conditions, about, the process of advancement, pay,
21 conditions, anything they want to know, or maybe there's something
22 specific they want to know, anyway, they can just call out a tape and listen
23 to it...
24
25 Dick Trierweiler: Mm-hm.
26
27 Shirley Bradley: ...and read the transcript.
28
29 Dick Trierweiler: Oh, okay.
30
31 Shirley Bradley: And, uh...
32
33 Dick Trierweiler: I don't really know of anything too much more to add I guess.
34
35 Shirley Bradley: Okay. Well, this has been fun.
36
37 Dick Trierweiler: Mm-hm.
38
39 Shirley Bradley: Um, I guess I will ask you, outside of Ray Kimball that you mentioned, is
40 there some of the other workers that you recall working with?
41
42 Dick Trierweiler: Alex [Giannotti 34:09], he, he became a service representative in the field.
43
44 Shirley Bradley: [Giannotti 34:13]?
45

1 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. And, uh, Don [inaudible 34:16] became, he was a repairman on the
2 repair floor and then he became a service representative and later became
3 a sales representative.
4

5 Shirley Bradley: Oh.
6

7 Dick Trierweiler: He lives in Florida. Uh, you know, Don or [inaudible 34:28] Gregory
8 lives in Pennsylvania. Jerry [Brinker 34:33] he was the one that kind of
9 helped break me in a little bit in the technical service department.
10

11 Shirley Bradley: Oh.
12

13 Dick Trierweiler: And he became a national accounts manager for contacting all the UPS
14 people.
15

16 Shirley Bradley: [34:49] For deliveries?
17

18 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah. You know, for any of the, we built a lot of trucks for UPS.
19

20 Shirley Bradley: Oh, I know. I was – [34:55] oh, you did?
21

22 Dick Trierweiler: Yeah.
23

24 Shirley Bradley: I was going to ask you too about military. You mentioned military trucks.
25 [35:00] Did you have to go to any of the bases to troubleshoot?
26

27 Dick Trierweiler: No. I was, I was cleared through FBI so that I could.
28

29 Shirley Bradley: Oh, you were?
30

31 Dick Trierweiler: But, uh, but I never had to go to one, so. I did that all before when I went
32 in the army. [laughter]
33

34 Shirley Bradley: I thank you so much.
35

36 Dick Trierweiler: Okay. Thank you. Nice meeting you.
37

38 Shirley Bradley: Nice to meet you too.
39
40
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