

Michelle Baulch discusses her experiences as a contract occupational therapist at the Fisher Body medical in Lansing, MI

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4
5Doreen Howard: [recorder clicking] [tsk] Hi. Doreen Howard. I'm with the Lansing Fisher
6 Body Historical Project. Um, we're interviewing Michelle Baulch. It is
7 [papers rustling] [ringing] [clicking] October 6, 2005. Uh, we're at the
8 Fisher Body plant, and it's approximately 9:30 a.m. [tsk] Um, everyone
9 please introduce [papers rustling] yourselves.
10
11Mike Fleming: I'm Mike Fleming. [clicking]
12
13Linda Johnson: Linda Johnson.
14
15Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher.
16
17Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter.
18
19Doreen Howard: Okay. [tsk] [0:28] Um, Michelle, could you please, uh, spell your name?
20 [clicking] [ringing]
21
22Michelle Baulch: My first and last?
23
24Doreen Howard: Your last name.
25
26Michelle Baulch: B-A-U-L-C-H. [clicking]
27
28Doreen Howard: Okay. [0:37] And, um [clicking], state your [thumping] address for the
29 record, please.
30
31Michelle Baulch: P.O. Box 313 [clicking], DeWitt, Michigan 48820.
32
33 [background movement]
34
35Doreen Howard: Okay. [0:45] And what, what is your title [papers rustling] here at the plant?
36
37 [clicking]
38
39Michelle Baulch: I'm the occupational therapist for all the [background movement] GM
40 employees in the city.
41
42Doreen Howard: Okay. [clicking] [0:54] And how long have you worked for...
43
44Michelle Baulch: I have...
45
46Doreen Howard: ...us?
47

1 [background movement]
2
3Michelle Baulch: ...been here [clicking] for 2 years.
4
5Doreen Howard: For 2 years. [1:00] Um, do you, uh [clicking], recall your first day?
6 [clicking]
7
8Michelle Baulch: Oh, I do [beeping], yeah.
9
10Doreen Howard: [1:05] Can you tell [beeping] us a little bit about it? [tsk]
11
12Michelle Baulch: Mm-hm. [beeping] I was born here. [beeping] I was born at St. Lawrence, so
13 I've grown up in [beeping] the Lansing area [beeping], and I always
14 wondered what went on inside this plant. And my husband used to sell cars.
15 My father-in-law sells cars, Chevys.
16
17Doreen Howard: Okay.
18
19Michelle Baulch: And I always wondered how cars were put together, and I thought it was the
20 coolest thing to cross the assembly line to get to work every [beeping] day.
21 [background movement] That was, that was my first day, and I re-, that was
22 really cool to me, so...
23
24 [background movement]
25
26Doreen Howard: Okay. [thumping] [1:29] Did you have any problems finding your [home
27 1:32] where you were [clicking] to do your [background movement] work
28 at? [papers rustling] A lotta people I know had a lotta problems getting in
29 and outta the plant when they – they'd [background movement] get there
30 and...
31
32Michelle Baulch: I just followed that path.
33
34 [laughter]
35
36Doreen Howard: Stay within the lines.
37
38Michelle Baulch: Just follow in the lines, yep.
39
40Doreen Howard: Yep.
41
42Michelle Baulch: And as I got more comfortable, I [took 1:46] [clicking] outta those lines a
43 lotta times to – [background noises] I just found my way around, so...
44
45Doreen Howard: Okay. [1:52] Um, [clicking] tell me a little bit [creaking] about [background
46 movement], about your day. Um, [background movement] [tsk] what, what

1 time do you start and what [clicking], what you do during the day while
2 you're here?
3

4Michelle Baulch: Um, my day typically starts at 8, and I go over to Metal Fab, and I do
5 [background movement] walk-throughs with Ergonomics and Medical. We
6 look at jobs. And then I come here [background movement], and I work
7 with people that I have scheduled for the day. [background movement] Um
8 [background movement], since the plant shut down, I have a lot of sittin'
9 around time to do paperwork, and I'm studying [background noises] to take
10 my certification in [clicking] hand therapy [background movement], so I'm
11 doing a lotta studying and reading when I'm not [background movement]
12 treatin', treating the employees.
13

14Mike Fleming: [tsk] [2:26] What was your first day like on the job [background noises]
15 when you came in and takin' over all of the plants for General Motors
16 [background noises] for the Lansing area? What was that very first
17 [creaking] day like?
18

19Michelle Baulch: Um, it was kinda busy because the last company [creaking] that was
20 providing the services had [clicking] to take all their stuff [background
21 movement], and we hadda bring all of our stuff in and assemble it and
22 [creaking] set it up and [creaking], um, just get the clinic organized
23 [background movement] and answer people's questions who walked by as to
24 what we were doing. So [clicking], um, it was more just an organization
25 day. [background movement] And then I was kinda nervous the first few
26 days 'cause, um [creaking], I have hand therapy [thumping] experience, but
27 I've, I had just come from nursing homes, so [background movement] I had
28 a different population [background movement] [laughter], different
29 treatments.
30

31Mike Fleming: [Inaudible 3:10].
32

33Marilyn Coulter: [3:10] Um, Michelle, just [one other 3:11] question , just because, for those
34 people who [background movement] will be hearing this and don't know,
35 could you [background movement] explain what a walk-through
36 [background movement] is? [What their goal 3:16] is?
37

38Michelle Baulch: Mm-hm. [background noises] What we do is we look at jobs where there
39 have been a complaint of a sprain or a strain, and we go to the [clicking]
40 actual job and watch that employee work [clicking] to see if maybe the job
41 needs [tapping] to be modified or if the employee needs to maybe use their
42 hands in a different way, um, or if – [creaking] sometimes we discover
43 [background movement] that somebody was taught the job [background
44 movement], but they [background movement] were taught the job the wrong
45 way or that they're using too many, you know, lifting too many parts. We

1 just kind of try to figure out what the root of the problem is, whether it's
2 external or internal.
3
4 [clicking]
5
6Doreen Howard: Okay. [3:46] And has, um, [background movement] is that part of any
7 particular program [papers rustling] [clicking] that's set up [thumping] with
8 General Motors or...
9
10Michelle Baulch: That was...
11
12Doreen Howard: ...was that somethin' that you had...
13
14 [clicking]
15
16Michelle Baulch: ...that was...
17
18Doreen Howard: ...[initiated 3:54]?
19
20Michelle Baulch: ...requested from [Jim Miller 3:57] [clicking] over at Plant 3 about a year
21 and a half ago. [background movement] Wanted to kind of investigate, you
22 know [clicking], why there were problems occurring.
23
24Mike Fleming: [tsk] [4:06] Who is [Jim Miller]?
25
26 [background movement]
27
28Michelle Baulch: He's the personnel director [background movement] at Plant 3.
29
30Mike Fleming: Jim [Mitchell 4:10].
31
32Michelle Baulch: [Mitchell]. Yes. I always wanna call him [Miller]. [laughter] Sorry. [laughter]
33
34 [background movement]
35
36Mike Fleming: [4:15] Um [clicking], [the 4:17] majority of the [background movement]
37 injuries you see, musculoskeletal...
38
39Michelle Baulch: Mm-hm.
40
41Mike Fleming: ...repetitive injuries. What type of injuries [clicking] do you see?
42
43Michelle Baulch: Um, because I'm the occupational therapist, I treat from the shoulders
44 [background movement] to the fingertips, so I see a lot of carpal tunnel, a lot
45 of lateral epicondylitis, trigger finger, um, hand pain, shoulder strains

1 [background movement], rotator cuff tears. [background movement] Um,
2 pretty much any injury you can do to your arm, I can help treat it.
3
4Mike Fleming: [4:45] But these are generally categorized as repetitive injuries or no?
5
6 [door squeaking] [background noises]
7
8Michelle Baulch: Hm [creaking], sometimes. [creaking] Um, lacerations, you know...
9
10Mike Fleming: [Inaudible 5:00]...
11
12Michelle Baulch: ...[inaudible 5:00]...
13
14Mike Fleming: ...[inaudible 5:01]...
15
16Michelle Baulch: ...incidents [inaudible 5:01]...
17
18Mike Fleming: ...[inaudible 5:02] lacerations [inaudible 5:03] [laughter], but the majority...
19
20Michelle Baulch: ...yeah.
21
22Mike Fleming: ...of our injuries [background noises] at an automobile [clicking] plant [I
23 think would be 5:06].
24
25 [background noises]
26
27Michelle Baulch: I don't really wanna answer that question.
28
29 [laughter]
30
31Doug Rademacher: [Inaudible 5:12].
32
33Michelle Baulch: Yeah.
34
35Doreen Howard: [5:15] So, um [clicking], when [clicking] – how do people get referred to
36 you?
37
38Michelle Baulch: There are 2 ways. Um, through Plant Medical, and also what a lotta people
39 don't realize is that we treat all the GM employees who have personal
40 injuries as well. Even if their outside [background noises] physician requests
41 therapy, they can [thumping] come here [background noises], and there are
42 no fees or charges involved. [background noises] We actually don't report to
43 insurances [background noises], so that's a health cost way that GM's tryin'
44 ta [background noises] get the word out, you know, tryin' ta get the word out
45 [background noises] to employees that [background noises] we're here for
46 [background noises] personal injuries as well. [background noises] Um, but

1 you have to go through a medical department [background noises] to be
2 seen. You have to have a prescription. [clicking]
3
4 Doreen Howard: And, um [clicking], so when you come in the morning [background noises],
5 you said you do your walk-throughs and then you see a few [thumping]
6 people. [background noises] [6:03] Is there anything that you do [clicking]
7 at lunchtime? Anything fun or, uh, groups of people that you [background
8 noises] have met maybe over [tsk] your, your time here that you tend to do
9 anything with?
10
11 Michelle Baulch: Um, no because sometimes we get walk-in employees, so we, we stay close
12 to the clinic during lunchtimes. But there is, um – every other month,
13 [Sharon 6:22] and I do go to an outside clinic for, um, kind of a
14 brainstorming meeting with other therapists in town, treatments, you know,
15 different – you know, there's always a different [background movement]
16 way to treat. And so we get together with that group during [background
17 movement] lunchtime.
18
19 Doreen Howard: [6:36] Here in our facility [background movement], have you seen, uh,
20 improvements in the time that you were here as far as, um [tsk], maybe
21 fewer injuries or have you seen [background noises] more injuries
22 [background noises] or [background movement] [inaudible 6:49]...
23
24 Michelle Baulch: At this...
25
26 Doreen Howard: ...[inaudible 6:50]...
27
28 Michelle Baulch: ...particular plant, fewer injuries because of all the, the layoffs. [background
29 movement] Um, I mean [clicking], that's primarily why we see less.
30 [background movement] Um...
31
32 [background movement]
33
34 Doreen Howard: But when w-, [clicking] when they were...
35
36 Michelle Baulch: I'm just...
37
38 Doreen Howard: ... [staffed 7:04]...
39
40 Michelle Baulch: ...yeah. I'm tryin' ta think...
41
42 Doreen Howard: ...[to capacity 7:05]...
43
44 Michelle Baulch: ...when they're ful-, when they were full capacity.
45
46 [background noises]

1
2Doreen Howard: [Okay 7:07].
3
4Michelle Baulch: Um, you know, probably didn't see as many people as you would expect
5 from a plant with the employee [background noises] population [background
6 noises] the size that it is [background noises], um [background noises],
7 compared to other plants in the city.
8
9Doug Rademacher: Michelle, you said that [clicking] your father and your brother – or your
10 husband sold...
11
12Michelle Baulch: [My 7:23]...
13
14Doug Rademacher: ...cars.
15
16 [background movement]
17
18Michelle Baulch: ...and my father.
19
20Doug Rademacher: And I was curious, um, you said you always wondered what went on in this
21 building...
22
23Michelle Baulch: Mm-hm.
24
25Doug Rademacher: ...you grew up in this area. [7:30] Uh [background movement], did you gain
26 a respect for the workforce after seeing what they do on a daily basis?
27
28 [clicking]
29
30Michelle Baulch: Oh yeah. Yep. Um, you know, the little intricacies to putting in, you know,
31 the parts [clicking], um. I really didn't know what to expect on how – I did, I
32 had no idea of how a car was built. I thought it was a – it was pretty neat,
33 um, you know, starting over at Metal Fab and watching the parts being
34 pressed [background movement] and then watching'm come over here and
35 the different, um, hoists that are used and the different body postures people
36 have to get into to put the cars together. It's – yeah [clicking]. You have a
37 new appreciation for [clicking] why your cars are [clicking], you know, not
38 \$5000. [laughter]
39
40 [papers rustling]
41
42Doreen Howard: Um.
43
44 [papers rustling] [clicking]
45

1Mike Fleming: [8:13] Do you [background noises], um, hire your own staff or is [clicking]
2 that something that's done externally or [background noises] do you, are you
3 [background noises] responsible for that?
4
5 [background noises]
6
7Michelle Baulch: Me personally, no. We are an outside provider. [clicking] We do have, um
8 [clicking] – our boss is in Janesville at the Janesville plant. [background
9 noises] And [background noises], um, he comes out if we need some – we
10 have [clicking] some staffing that needs [clicking] to be added [clicking], e
11 comes out and does interviews. But, um, she, it's – we work for a company
12 out of Kansas that provides to your Fairfax plant as well.
13
14Doreen Howard: Hm.
15
16 [background noises]
17
18Doug Rademacher: Can you share...
19
20Michelle Baulch: And I personally don't...
21
22Doug Rademacher: ...[oh, I'm sorry 8:45]. [8:46] Could you share – or is there a concern about
23 Janesville? Have you been [clicking] getting communications from
24 [clicking], uh, the talk of Janesville possibly being [background movement],
25 um, uh, one a the plants that has been marked to maybe go down [inaudible
26 8:58]...
27
28Michelle Baulch: It's now one of the oldest, isn't it?
29
30Doreen Howard: Yeah.
31
32Doug Rademacher: Yeah. So I just wondered if that had [background noises] come to you from
33 your [background noises] boss.
34
35Michelle Baulch: Um, actually I read that in the state journal. [laughter] Um, no. Our, our big
36 concern right now is just getting our therapy contract renewed. This – it
37 expired [background movement] the end of last month, and it's kinda going
38 on a month-to-month basis, so, um, but I haven't heard. [background
39 movement] Yeah, he's – that's our concern right now is just [thumping], you
40 know...
41
42Doreen Howard: Continuing...
43
44Michelle Baulch: ...continuing those contracts...
45
46Doreen Howard: [Mm-hm 9:21].

1
2Michelle Baulch: ...and then whether the plant in Janesville [background noises] shuts down,
3 then, then that would be looked at [inaudible 9:27]...
4
5Doug Rademacher: So you share a contract. [9:29] Is, is it a union company or is it just private?
6
7Michelle Baulch: No. It's a small. There, there aren't any therapy clinics that are unionized
8 [background movement]. They're – it's, um [background noises], it's a small,
9 family-owned business down in Kansas City, Kansas, and they have a, they
10 have clinics in [clicking] Kansas City, Missouri. Um, we were their first out-
11 of-state clinic that they had had [background noises], so, and they have
12 [background noises] Michigan and then they added Janesville.
13
14Mike Fleming: [9:51] Can you explain to us [clicking] how your working, uh [background
15 noises], um, [tsk] relationship is with the physicians in the plant that refer
16 [background noises] patients to you?
17
18 [background movement]
19
20Michelle Baulch: [tsk] Um, I think, I think they're pretty good. They're very reasonable
21 people. Um [background noises], you know, if I have suggestions or
22 thoughts or concerns [clicking], they're, they're real [clicking] receptive to
23 what I [clicking] have to say. Um, if I recommend somebody to continue
24 with services, they [clicking] usually go along with me. [background
25 movement] Um, so yeah, I think they're, they're pretty open and
26 [background noises] responsive.
27
28 [clicking]
29
30Mike Fleming: [10:24] As an [clicking] employee, if I came to [clicking] the Medical
31 Department [clicking] and I had some [background movement], uh,
32 repetitive injuries and I needed therapy [background noises], explain how
33 that process would work. What would I go through [background
34 movement]? What would happen to me?
35
36 [background noises]
37
38Michelle Baulch: You would see, um, one a the plant doctors [clicking], and they would
39 determine – we, we offer a service called Home Strengthening and
40 Conditioning, and sometimes they use that route first where it's a one-time
41 visit. You come and see me, I do a quick evaluation [background
42 movement], see if maybe there's some stretches or, um, some different
43 [background movement], um, hand postures that you could use to make your
44 symptoms decrease [background movement] and usually have you call back
45 7 to 10 days after that. And if it doesn't get better, then you go back to
46 Medical, and typically [clicking] they'll send you for an evaluation

1 [clicking] from me where I do a full evaluation. And then [tsk] we set up a
2 treatment plan and then have you come back for about 6 sessions and go
3 through a whole therapy treatment, which, you know, depending on your
4 needs, we use fluidotherapy, ultrasounds [background noises], TENS unit,
5 the hot packs, you know. We're a full, running clinic like you would see in
6 the, you know, outside of GM.
7

8Mike Fleming: [Okay 11:27].
9

10 [clicking]
11

12Doug Rademacher: [11:29] Uh, what's your most rewarding success as far as therapy here in this
13 facility?
14

15Michelle Baulch: Uh, I have...
16

17Doug Rademacher: Not necessarily [inaudible 11:36] [background movement], but you said...
18

19Michelle Baulch: ...right.
20

21Doug Rademacher: ...you do all of Lansing.
22

23Michelle Baulch: [tsk] Well I have to say, um, I do have [clicking] some employees who have
24 had some – [tsk] should've seen some other surgeons [laughter], who, um,
25 you know, come in with their hand, you know, in this position, and they're
26 very protective of it and won't use it and over time get'm to relax and, and
27 work with that and then be able to use their hand again [background
28 movement] because you just don't realize how important your hands and
29 arms are until you've had a significant injury [background noises]. So that
30 always makes me feel good when somebody says, "I'm so much better, and I
31 can hold my child again," [clicking] or "I can brush my own hair," or
32 [clicking], you know. So that makes me happy [background noises] 'cause I
33 do get my fair share of people who say I did cure'm. [laughter] [thumping]
34 They took my wand away from me [inaudible 12:17].
35

36 [laughter]
37

38Doug Rademacher: They took your wand away, huh?
39

40 [laughter]
41

42Doreen Howard: Okay. [12:21] Um [tsk], is there, uh, [clicking] anything that, that you
43 wanted to talk about that [background noises], that we haven't touched on at
44 all or, uh, your – any memories or [background movement] anything that,
45 that you [background movement] can recall?
46

1 [background noises]
2
3Michelle Baulch: No, I think that's, that's about it. We're just, um – we may, we may not be
4 providing the therapy services to this local, at the new plant [background
5 noises] 'cause they're treating it separately [background movement], so
6 [clicking], from LGR. So we're kinda hopin' that we'll be able to stay there.
7 We [background movement], you know, Sharon knows a lotta people...
8
9Doreen Howard: Yeah.
10
11Michelle Baulch: ...and [we 12:55] [background noises] get a lotta visitors who just pop in to
12 say hi, who [background movement], you know, we've treated in the past.
13 And that's nice that [background movement], you know, you musta done
14 something [clicking] good for them that they would come back and, and
15 wanna say hello to you.
16
17Doreen Howard: [Right. Gotcha. 13:04]
18
19Michelle Baulch: Yeah.
20
21Doreen Howard: [Hm 13:07].
22
23 [background noises]
24
25Michelle Baulch: So we just hope that we're able to continue over at the new plant.
26
27Doug Rademacher: Can I just ask one more question?
28
29Michelle Baulch: Sure.
30
31 [clicking]
32
33Doug Rademacher: [13:13] Um, what did you find [clicking] [that was – 13:13] what's the
34 demeanor of the average person that comes to see you? [background noises]
35 Uh, the worker?
36
37Michelle Baulch: [tsk] [background noises] Most, you know, most people know that I didn't
38 cause their injury, so they're [laughter], they're, you know. I, I don't get
39 [clicking] the belligerent person, you know. I don't get really many very
40 angry people who say nasty things to me. But, um, most people, you know,
41 most people are willing to take my suggestions and, and take them home
42 and work on them and do stretches and [background noises]. You know,
43 they're, they're pretty receptive to try, you know [background noises], to
44 what I plan to help get them better. [clicking] So it's [background
45 movement], you know, pretty positive overall.
46

1 [background movement]
2
3Doreen Howard: [13:53] Where did you go to school to learn your...
4
5 [background noises]
6
7Michelle Baulch: [I was gonna say 13:54] which school? I went to 3 colleges. [laughter]
8
9Doreen Howard: [All right 13:56].
10
11Michelle Baulch: Um, I got my bachelor's degree in occupational therapy from Baker College
12 in Flint [clicking], and I have minors in psychology and health sciences.
13 And, um, I was also in the first graduating class, so I was the guinea pig.
14 And our instructors were cli-, you know, clinicians who [clicking] didn't
15 realize how much was too much in terms of homework and assignments.
16 [laughter]
17
18Doreen Howard: [Yeah 14:19].
19
20Doug Rademacher: [So 14:19]...
21
22Michelle Baulch: So, and I graduated from there about 10 years ago.
23
24Doug Rademacher: Well we appreciate you putting [background movement] all that effort into
25 your education and sharing your abilities and, and talents with us.
26
27Michelle Baulch: Thank you.
28
29Marilyn Coulter: Thank you.
30
31Doreen Howard: Thank you very much, Michelle.
32
33Mike Fleming: And thank you [background noises] very much. [recorder clicking]
34
35
36/lk