

1 **MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY – SHAWN NICHOLSON**
2 **MICHAEL BENNETT DISCUSSES HIS CAREER AS A PRODUCTION WORKER,**
3 **ALTERNATE COMMITTEEMAN AND UAW LOCAL 602 VICE PRESIDENT AT THE**
4 **FISHER BODY PLANT IN LANSING MI**
5
6

7Cheryl McQuaid: I am Cheryl McQuaid. It's September 14th at approximately 9 a.m. We're
8 at the UAW Local 602 Hall. We're getting ready to, uh, interview Mike
9 Bennett. Uh, first we're gonna introduce the rest of the people in the room.
10
11John Fedewa: John Fedewa.
12
13Linda Johnson: Linda Johnson.
14
15Kathryn Berry: Kathy Berry.
16
17Doreen Howard: Doreen Howard.
18
19Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter.
20
21Michael Fleming: And Mike Fleming.
22
23Cheryl McQuaid: [0:23] Uh, Mike, could you tell us your name and spell it out for the
24 record?
25
26Michael Bennett: Uh, Michael Bennett, M-I-C-H-A-E-L B-E-N-N-E-T-T.
27
28Cheryl McQuaid: [0:34] And what is your address?
29
30Michael Bennett: 1104 Gidner Road, Charlotte, Michigan.
31
32Cheryl McQuaid: And you're, of course, male. [0:42] Um, are you married. [0:43] Do you
33 have children?
34
35Michael Bennett: Uh, yeah, I'm married. Uh, I have 4 children, 1 stepchild, 6 grandchildren
36 and another grandchild on the way. [laughter]
37
38Cheryl McQuaid: [0:55] And what is your age?
39
40Michael Bennett: 54. [laughter]
41
42Cheryl McQuaid: [1:02] Your national origin?
43
44Michael Bennett: U.S.
45
46Cheryl McQuaid: [1:06] White? [laughter] Okay.

1
2 Michael Bennett: N-, national origin U.S., white, whatever. [laughter]
3
4 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:11] Um, military [banging] service? [1:13] Did you serve in the
5 military?
6
7 Michael Bennett: No, I did not.
8
9 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:17] And I guess now I'd like to know the date you hired in and what
10 department did you hire in at?
11
12 Michael Bennett: Uh, I hired in December 16, 1970, into the Trim Department on the M
13 line.
14
15 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:31] Do you remember your first boss, your first job?
16
17 Michael Bennett: Uh, my first boss was Dick [Phalen 1:40]. My first job? What did I do that
18 first job? I was installing, uh, driver's side power window buttons into the
19 doors.
20
21 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:54] And was that first shift or second shift?
22
23 Michael Bennett: Second shift.
24
25 Cheryl McQuaid: Second shift. [1:59] Do you have any other family in the plant?
26
27 [clanking]
28
29 Michael Bennett: No.
30
31 Cheryl McQuaid: [2:03] No other family?
32
33 Michael Bennett: No oth-, none o-, nope.
34
35 Cheryl McQuaid: [2:06] Uh, were you ever laid off?
36
37 Michael Bennett: Mm-hm. [laughter] A time or two. [laughter] Uh, actually I was laid off 1
38 stretch. Um, usually I just got moved around the plant but I – in the oil, oil
39 embargo in the '70s, I got laid off in, uh, February of 1974 and I worked a
40 few short stretches in between there and then they called me back
41 permanently in, uh, March of 1976. [thumping]
42
43 Cheryl McQuaid: [2:43] Why did you hire into Fisher Body?
44
45 Michael Bennett: Uh, basically it was more benefits than anything. I had a job that was
46 paying almost the same money but it was more the ben-, I knew the
47 benefits was a lot better.

1
2 Cheryl McQuaid: [2:55] Do you have any, um, special memories that you'd like to share
3 with us?
4
5 Michael Bennett: [laughter] Aww, there's just – I don't know. Really, I – there's so many
6 things happening there that, eh, it's hard to say anything was special
7 [inaudible 3:10] most of 'm were good anyway.
8
9 Cheryl McQuaid: [3:12] Do you have a favorite boss that you worked for?
10
11 Michael Bennett: [sighing] Boy [pause] probably one of the best I worked for I thought was
12 Bob [Damon 3:23].
13
14 Cheryl McQuaid: Um, very nice guy. Uh... [laughter]
15
16 Female: [3:33] When did you, uh, run for office, Mike, in the union.
17
18 Michael Bennett: Um, 19 [tsk] – oh, boy. I'm trying to think exactly what year that was.
19 Early 80s, '80-, [sighing] about '82, I believe, was the first time I held
20 office.
21
22 Female: [3:52] And what – as a committee person or...?
23
24 Michael Bennett: [Inaudible 3:54] committee. Yes.
25
26 Female: Um...
27
28 Michael Bennett: I think about the same time, I also, uh, went on the Election Committee.
29
30 Female: Uh-huh. [clanking] [4:05] And where'd you go from that because you did
31 end up as at least vice president?
32
33 Michael Bennett: I – yeah, I was vice president for 6 years.
34
35 Female: [Inaudible 4:13].
36
37 Michael Bennett: Um...
38
39 Female: [4:14] What years was that?
40
41 Michael Bennett: Uh, 19- [laughter] [inaudible 4:19] home too and I'm trying to – it's
42 terrible. I'm terrible at years. Um, '90-, [sh-sh-sh] 3 to '99. I think '99
43 would have been an election year if I remember right.
44
45 Female: Mm-hm. [4:37] And who was president when you were vice president?
46

1 Michael Bennett: Garry Bernath.
2
3 Female: Gary. [4:42] And d-, did you hold any other offices besides...?
4
5 Michael Bennett: [Inaudible 4:45] Committee, Alternate Committee. Uh, like I say, I was...
6
7 Female: Mm-hm.
8
9 Michael Bennett: ...Chairman of the Election Committee for quite a few years. In fact, I
10 gave that up to run for vice president...
11
12 Female: Okay.
13
14 Michael Bennett: ...so.
15
16 Cheryl McQuaid: So you w-, you hired in in M trim. [4:57] What – did you work in any
17 other departments?
18
19 Michael Bennett: [laughter] How many more departments are there in there? That's how
20 many I worked in. [laughter]
21
22 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:02] Oh, really, you were everywhere?
23
24 Michael Bennett: I worked in every department in there. [laughter] I worked in Paint, uh,
25 down in the Hardware, what they used to call the Hardware back [tapping]
26 years ago. Uh, they call it what – Hard and Soft Trim now?
27
28 Female: Mm-hm.
29
30 Michael Bennett: We use to call it hardware. Um, I nev-, the [cushion 5:14] room had
31 already gone. They had partials in the, in the plant itself. It's not – I never
32 did work in that area. But as far as Paint, Trim, Body Shop, I worked in all
33 of'm.
34
35 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:23] What were some of the jobs you did in Paint?
36
37 Michael Bennett: I was there a short while and that was long enough. [laughter]
38
39 Male: [Inaudible 5:28]
40
41 Michael Bennett: I, I sprayed sealer inside the doors, so.
42
43 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:32] And in the Body Shop, did you...
44
45 Michael Bennett: Uh, boy.
46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: ...spotweld or...?
2
3 Michael Bennett: Uh, I've done everything down there, spotweld, [med 5:38] welded, uh,
4 like I said earlier when we talked, uh, I was a coordinator there. When I
5 retired, I was a coordinator. Um, about anything there was to do because I
6 was on Utility down there for years too, so I've done about everything
7 down there there was to do.
8
9 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:53] So you spent a lot of time in the Body Shop?
10
11 Michael Bennett: Uh, most of my time was spent in the Body Shop. Yeah.
12
13 Marilyn Coulter: [5:59] So out of the 3 different departments, was the Body Shop your
14 favorite place to work and, if so, why?
15
16 Michael Bennett: Actually, it wasn't my favorite [laughter] 'cause I also worked on
17 Inspection for a f-, a couple years and that was actually my favorite...
18
19 Marilyn Coulter: [6:14] Now when...
20
21 Michael Bennett: ...'cause...
22
23 Marilyn Coulter: ...you did inspection, was that in Body Shop or in Trim?
24
25 Michael Bennett: That was in Trim. That was final trim.
26
27 Female: Mm-hm.
28
29 Michael Bennett: It's for repair. Um, that was actually my favorite. Body Shop was –
30 [thumping] I guess after that, uh, Body Shop was probably my s-, best or
31 my favorite for the simple fact I could make moves there if I n-, wanted to
32 or needed to. Um, then like now on Inspection, if you haven't got a lotta
33 seniority, you don't go to days for a starter and that was one of the main
34 reasons I went to Body Shop.
35
36 Marilyn Coulter: [6:42] So when you say make moves, does that mean change jobs?
37
38 Michael Bennett: Back, [laughter] back when I went into the Body Shop, you could change
39 jobs about every other week if you wanted to. That's how easy it was to
40 move around. I mean it is – it was a lot different than what the setup is
41 now for, for applying for jobs. Uh, basically if a job come open, you said
42 you – especially with – if [inaudible 7:05] have him handy, um, tell'm y-,
43 you want that job. If nobody else asked for it, you got it, you know?
44
45 Marilyn Coulter: Yeah.
46

1 Michael Bennett: So, eh, it m-, [laughter] it made that – it was that easy.
2

3 Marilyn Coulter: [7:12] W-, now what kind of work – you said you had – you came in not
4 for the benefits. What kind of job did you do before you came in here?
5

6 Michael Bennett: Um, yeah, at the time I come in, I was actually a stockperson at Universal
7 Electric in Owosso.
8

9 Marilyn Coulter: So you were working in a stock. [7:29] So that was kind of like a parts
10 plant more or less?
11

12 Michael Bennett: No. They built electric motors...
13

14 Marilyn Coulter: Okay.
15

16 Michael Bennett: ...and what – I just, uh, rows of steel I had to hang, um, uh, when they
17 filled their baskets up, uh, with the rotors that go inside of a motor. I
18 would have to take them and, and stock'm [clanking] up – stack'm up
19 someplace.
20

21 Marilyn Coulter: [7:47] So what did you think when you came inside this building and I –
22 in Fisher Body in 1970? [throat clearing] [7:56] Was it much like the
23 same? Was it [okay 7:57]?
24

25 Michael Bennett: Compared to now, you mean?
26

27 Marilyn Coulter: [8:00] Compared to where you worked before?
28

29 Michael Bennett: Oh, bef-, where I worked before? Um, [pause] once, once you get in the
30 o-, it wasn't that much di-, it was, it was a factory, you know.
31

32 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
33

34 Michael Bennett: A factory was a factory back then as far as I am – was concerned.
35

36 Marilyn Coulter: [Okay 8:17].
37

38 Michael Bennett: But, uh, the aspect of a lot more people. Um, I guess the place I worked
39 before was a – more of a family oriented...
40

41 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
42

43 Michael Bennett: ...so it took it a little bit different here. You had to be outgoing in order to
44 get – know a little more people. Okay? [laughter]
45

46 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. [8:33] So, um, did you get close to people here?

1
2 Michael Bennett: Uh, I made some good friends in here. Yes.
3
4 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [8:40] What are some of the types of things that you guys did
5 that you think brought you close together?
6
7 Michael Bennett: Oh, goodness. Um, back years ago, motorcycle riding was one of'm and,
8 uh, [laughter] [inaudible 8:52]. That's, that's a group, you know, all in
9 itself but, uh, sports, uh, mainly hunting and fishing-type things is what I
10 got into a lot with a lotta people.
11
12 Marilyn Coulter: With coworkers, so you did a lot of outside things. [9:03] Were there any
13 types of things that took place inside the plant that you thought brought
14 you close toge-, together?
15
16 Michael Bennett: Hm.
17
18 Marilyn Coulter: [9:09] Were there dinners? [9:10] Were there pranks?
19
20 Michael Bennett: We used to have a lotta dinners. I r-...
21
22 Cheryl McQuaid: [9:14] Pranks?
23
24 Michael Bennett: Pranks? [laughter] No, we never done nothing like that. [laughter]
25
26 Marilyn Coulter: From the look on your face, it seems like you have a couple pranks you
27 might want to share.
28
29 Michael Bennett: I, I c-, right off hand, I can't think of any but I, I know there had to have
30 been some. [laughter] Uh, I don't know [what 9:33]. [laughter] I know one
31 we used – w-, I do remember one. I – you probably all know'm – know
32 this one too. We used to love to take the, uh, wallet and lay it down in the
33 aisle with grease on the bottom side. That was a good one. [laughter] We
34 loved that one.
35
36 Marilyn Coulter: Uh, someone would go to pick up that wallet and get a handful of grease.
37
38 Michael Bennett: Full of grease. That was good one. Either that or hang the hose up over
39 above'm and give'm a spray as they walk under. That was 2, 2 – we liked
40 both of them. [laughter]
41
42 Marilyn Coulter: [Okay 10:01]. [coughing] [10:03] So, um, when you, when you worked
43 down there and you went in in Inspection, um, did you see – and what
44 made you get involved? You worked on the line. You worked in these
45 different departments and then you became a committee representative.
46 [10:18] What made you want to get involved with the union?

1
2 Michael Bennett: Um, [pause] I, I always read the book to start with. I mean, I [act 10:31]
3 and I done a lotta reading and I always read the contract when it come out
4 and [sighing] actually I was working nightshift and people would always
5 come up to me and ask me questions about the contract and this went on, I
6 don't know, a year or two and, um, at the time I just started dating my
7 wife that, that I'm married to and, uh, she says why don't you just run for
8 committee? Everybody asks you the questions anyway and you give'm the
9 answers, why don't you just run? [laughter] That's why I ran for [laughter]
10 committee. So, [laughter] actually it was, it was a push from, from her.
11 You know, I was doing it anyway. Why not do it like you're supposed to,
12 you know?
13
14 Marilyn Coulter: Well that's great. So I will just go back to that. [11:17] You said you, you
15 met your wife here?
16
17 Michael Bennett: I certainly...
18
19 Marilyn Coulter: [11:20] At the plant?
20
21 Michael Bennett: ...did.
22
23 Marilyn Coulter: Oh. [11:22] And now were you all in the same department? Was that...
24
25 Michael Bennett: [Inaudible 11:24] worked [across the hall 11:25] from each other.
26 [laughter] [banging]
27
28 Marilyn Coulter: [Wow 11:28]. [11:29] And the rest was a sh-, a shop love story, huh?
29
30 Michael Bennett: Basically. [laughter]
31
32 Marilyn Coulter: Good. Um...
33
34 Doreen Howard: Well let's hear about it.
35
36 Female: Yeah. [11:42] What'd you do on your first date with your wife? [throat
37 clearing]
38
39 Female: [Inaudible 11:45]. [laughter]
40
41 Michael Bennett: Can we talk about that in here. [laughter] No. No. [laughter] [coughing]
42 Uh...
43
44 Doreen Howard: Where'd you take her on your first date?
45

1Michael Bennett: Uh, actually the first time we went out, we just went out after work and
2 had a few drinks.
3

4Doreen Howard: Mm-hm. Okay.
5

6Marilyn Coulter: [11:59] Um, how is it do you f-, how do you feel that it was – w-, was it
7 easy for you to have a relationship with somebody here in the plant?
8 [12:08] Did the plant hold a big part in it? [12:10] Um, did you, you know,
9 how do you feel about that?
10

11Michael Bennett: [sighing] [pause] I see nothing wrong with it myself. Uh, I guess when
12 you start talking plant relationships, um, if there are ones that don't affect
13 people and they hurt somebody else along the way, which mine didn't
14 because we were both single at the time, so, um, that type of relationship,
15 yeah.
16

17Female: Mm-hm.
18

19Marilyn Coulter: [Well that's good 12:41].
20

21Michael Bennett: Some of the other ones spawn bad things, you know, so. [laughter]
22

23Marilyn Coulter: They do. Um...
24

25Cheryl McQuaid: [12:50] Do you remember anybody that had any special artistic talents that
26 you worked by or that you, uh, was able to get to know from working in
27 the plant or...
28

29Michael Bennett: Oh, goodness.
30

31Cheryl McQuaid: ...that used to do government jobs for you or...?
32

33Michael Bennett: [laughter] Uh, [pause] right off hand, I can't [clinking] think of anything.
34 You know, I mean, eh, I knew a lotta people in there that we all done stuff
35 for each other but as far as [sighing] any big specific things, I, I don't
36 really guess so. I mean it was just [clanking] I help you, you help me. Uh,
37 that's the way we were, so.
38

39Cheryl McQuaid: [13:39] So you found a lotta cama-, camaraderie and...?
40

41Michael Bennett: I got to know very lotta people – very amount – a large amount of people.
42 Yes. [Where they're 13:47] – even, even just working in the plant. Uh, like
43 I say, one-, once I went on as vice president, I got to know a lot more
44 people, so. [laughter] And that's, you know, that's one – the bad thing
45 about nowadays, I [sprinted 13:59] a lotta them people and lotta times I'll
46 know a face but I can't – I knew – talked to so many people that a name I

1 can never come up with. [laughter] I mean like some of the people sittin'
2 in this room, I knew the face but, uh, a name, actually I couldn't remember
3 your name until they r-, [tapping] you told me again [laughter] and so.
4

5Cheryl McQuaid: That's okay.
6

7Michael Bennett: [laughter] But I knew, uh, I knew who you were. I mean so...
8

9Cheryl McQuaid: Yeah.
10

11Michael Bennett: ...you know?
12

13Marilyn Coulter: [14:27] So, Mike, when did you retire?
14

15Michael Bennett: November 1, 2000.
16

17Marilyn Coulter: [14:32] So being in here from 1970 to 2000 and being an hourly worker
18 and part of leadership, what are some of the biggest changes you, you
19 thought were the biggest impacts for GM and Local 602?
20

21Michael Bennett: Oh, [whew] um, some of the biggest changes, I think, was the committee
22 people and their – in later years back, eh, eh, up till the time I retired and
23 even now, um, they can't get things done as easily as we used to back in
24 the, eh, at '70s and '80s. I mean, we could go in and talk to a supervisor
25 and get somethin' done right then. [knocking] Nowadays they have to go
26 talk to somebody upstairs, you know?
27

28Female: Mm-hm.
29

30Michael Bennett: I think that's one of the biggest changes I've seen in, in – and as far as –
31 and it wasn't for the good but th-, I mean, that's the change, you know?
32

33Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [15:37] So there's like a longer time to get things done?
34

35Michael Bennett: A lot longer time to get things done.
36

37Marilyn Coulter: [15:41] Um, how did you feel about all the different name changes that
38 Fisher Body went through?
39

40Michael Bennett: [laughter] If you could keep up with'm you were doing good. [laughter]
41 Uh, I've always called it Fisher Body and I always will. Let's put it that
42 way. So I mean the name changes, that was on the building but as far as
43 I'm concerned, it was Fisher Body.
44

45Marilyn Coulter: Hm. [16:03] So, um, um, when, um, you hired in and – now did you, you
46 participated in, in the strikes [stuttering] does any strike stand out to you?

1
2 Michael Bennett: Actually, I [don't even 16:21] remember what year it was now. Um, we
3 went out for 2 days and I can't remember the year now – because I spent,
4 uh, it was in [sighing] early '90s. I don't remember which year, Um, but
5 we were out for a couple days, [throat clearing] 3 days, I think it was, um,
6 so I spent most of that – 2 days here at the Hall. Uh, as being on the
7 Election Committee, that actually falls under the chairman of the Strike
8 Committee when it comes to it for doing p-, things on strike, whether
9 people...
10
11 Female: Hm.
12
13 Michael Bennett: ...know that or not, it does. Um, I spent a good part of that 2 days here
14 with [Andy Granby 17:108]. He was the Strike Chair at the time.
15
16 Female: Mm-hm.
17
18 Michael Bennett: Uh, helping him, you know, making coffee rounds around to the gates and
19 stuff. Uh, I helped, uh, set up so we could get the doughnuts everyday
20 down to [Myers 17:20]. I went down and talked to them s-, that type a
21 stuff, so. And it's terrible I don't remember the year but [laughter]. Uh,
22 you know, that's actually the only strike. We've had a couple shutdowns
23 because of strikes elsewhere but that's actually the only strike I've been
24 through and, uh, like I say, in '70, I hired in right after the big strike of
25 '70, so.
26
27 Female: [Yeah 17:37].
28
29 Marilyn Coulter: So...
30
31 Cheryl McQuaid: [17:40] Do you recall what we were on strike for?
32
33 Michael Bennett: Oh, boy, I'm trying to think what it was that year. Hm. Yeah, I think it had
34 to do with benefits [clanking] if I remember right. That was the hold up.
35 But I ca-, I don't remember for sure.
36
37 Cheryl McQuaid: [18:01] [tsk] Speaking of benefits, what's your most appreciated bargained
38 benefit?
39
40 Michael Bennett: Uh, [laughter] definitely your healthcare. I mean that's – [clanking] I
41 mean you can get by with less classes if you need to, uh, that type a thing
42 but your hospitalization, healthcare, doctors, without that, uh, eh, eh – and
43 the people that don't have healthcare to cover that nowadays, I don't see
44 how they afford it.
45

1 Marilyn Coulter: [18:34] So, um, [inaudible 18:37] what was it like to be the vice president
2 of a Local? [rattling]
3
4 Michael Bennett: [tsk] Uh, [throat clearing] nerve-racking at times. [laughter] Uh, [sighing]
5 I guess people expect you to know everything and be able to do
6 everything.
7
8 Female: Mm-hm. [clanking]
9
10 Michael Bennett: Uh, you know, as president or vice president, if you're happen to be sitting
11 in the position, um, [clanking] and you can't do that. I mean, you know,
12 people expect you to b-, be their committeeman, go in the plant and take
13 care of things for'm. It's – people don't realize actually what the job
14 actually is, um, a-, it's mai-, more of a PR job than anything, um, basically
15 PR job. Uh, yeah, you do, you, you do get into other things, you have to
16 know other things, [throat clearing] uh, as far as contracts and stuff
17 because when people come talk to you if you don't know what's going on
18 with the contract, you can't talk to'm properly. So that's one thing you,
19 you need to know and I – [laughter] people that run for that – for the
20 president or the vice president's position, as far as I'm concerned should've
21 at some where down the line been on committee because if they haven't
22 been, they don't know the procedures and everything even though they
23 think they do. They haven't been through it to know what they are.
24
25 Female: Mm-hm.
26
27 Michael Bennett: Um, [clanking] just the experience of it helps when you're talking to
28 people while you're sittin' in that position, so.
29
30 Marilyn Coulter: [20:12] What would you say was the most rewarding thing you got to do
31 as vice president or when you acted as president?
32
33 Michael Bennett: [gutturals] Probably one of the most rewarding, I know there's been a few
34 times where I've, I've got back with – had to get with people, um, even
35 upper management in the plant, um, and like I say, you, you k-, you're not
36 a committeeperson but sometimes you act as one once in a while to...
37
38 Female: Mm-hm.
39
40 Michael Bennett: ...to try to help things along and probably [clanking] doing something like
41 that [throat clearing] and making sure that somebody gets their job back or
42 don't lose their job is probably one of the most gratifying as far as
43 [rattling] I'm concerned.
44
45 Marilyn Coulter: Um, Lansing Fisher Body UAW has always been known as the capital of
46 quality. People have always said we had a wonderful workforce. [21:07]

1 What would you say causes that? You know? [21:13] What, what makes
2 us different?
3
4 Michael Bennett: [tsk] [background conversation] I think probably the camaraderie of the
5 people [rattling] in here is probably one of the biggest things. [rattling]
6 Um, I know I've talked to people in [rattling] other plants, uh, been in
7 other plants, you know, uh, on tours and stuff, eh, uh, and you see a lot
8 more people participation and camaraderie in this plant that you do in
9 most any pl-, plant I've ever s-, been in. So I think that's got...
10
11 Female: Mm-hm.
12
13 Michael Bennett: ...a lot to do with it.
14
15 Michael Fleming: Mike, you were involved in one of the greatest launch of an automobile in
16 our facility ever, which was the J car, if I remember...
17
18 Michael Bennett: Yeah, I was.
19
20 Male: ...correctly. As we go into, eh, the new environment, we're going to
21 launch another new vehicle at the Delta plant. [22:09] I want you to talk
22 about what it took and what type of relationships that union and
23 management [clanking] had within our facility to make us have that great
24 launch and what we look forward to in the future.
25
26 Michael Bennett: Hm. Yeah. That was a lotta work. Um, [rattling] we've probably got more
27 [rattling] cooperation between union and management in that launch than
28 we've ever had. Uh, they let us, as far as the union, give us a lotta leeway
29 on, on things that we could do. Um, the people that, that were in the front
30 stages of that, uh, which I was one of'm. I set up – was one of the people
31 that set up the complete underbody in the Body Shop for that launch. Um,
32 [thumping] they gave us a leeway of being able to change equipment, uh,
33 amount of people, all that type stuff and for the company to do that
34 [thumping], that's saying, you know, they trust us to, to, to believe that,
35 [thumping] that we know what we're talking about and I think that was
36 probably one of the biggest things that helped that launch [outgrow 23:18]
37 like it did.
38
39 Michael Fleming: [23:22] So as we go forward to our Delta plant with the same workforce
40 pretty much, uh, talk about what you think it's going to take and what,
41 what our relationship is. [23:32] What do you see [for it 23:33]? [tapping]
42
43 Michael Bennett: Well from what I know of what's going on out there right now, eh, they're
44 pretty much on the same type line. Um, so I'm hoping and I'm expecting it,
45 it should be as well accepted as what the J car launch was when we, when
46 we first went to it. Um, I know with it being an all new plant, um, it's

1 gonna be a lot different for the fact that the people knew this plant.
2 Whether they went out for a while, they come back, it mighta been
3 reconfigured and changed [tapping] around a little bit but they knew the
4 plant. Uh, with the new plant, uh, [thumping] they're gonna be a little,
5 little different because they've gotta learn that plant. You know, they
6 knew this one and they've gotta learn that one. But all around between
7 from what I know of between union and management out there, um, it's
8 flowing good and I expect it to be as a good a launch as what we had on J
9 car.
10
11 Michael Fleming: And in the past, um, we've had various, um, corporation people come in
12 and look at our plant and they wonder how we could start on a bottom
13 floor, wind our way up to the second floor, end up on the third floor, ship
14 bodies across town and be the most productive in North American
15 operations. [24:50] Talk about that, Mike.
16
17 Michael Bennett: [laughter] There's only 1 word for that, that's the people. Th-, that's, that's
18 it. Period. I mean without the people there to do that, uh, like I s-, we – t-,
19 just a little while ago, you know, the camaraderie of'm and everything.
20 Without them people, that plant wouldn't be what it was. Uh, you could
21 put 3,000 different people in there and it wouldn't be the same. They
22 wouldn't get it done.
23
24 Cheryl McQuaid: Mike, I really appreciate you allowing us to interview you and I, uh, thank
25 you very much.
26
27 Marilyn Coulter: I got 1 other question. Just 1 other question [inaudible 25:28]. [25:29]
28 Mike, well you retired now but are you still active with the union?
29
30 Michael Bennett: Yes. Actually, right now I was just selected for my second term as vice
31 chair [of the 25:37] retirees.
32
33 Marilyn Coulter: [26:39] Why do you find it, um – why do you be involved with the retirees
34 chapter and why do you think the [laughter] union involvement is
35 important?
36
37 Michael Bennett: Um, I gotta friend that retired at the same time I did and we fish together
38 all the time and, uh, this'll, this'll answer your question. Um, [laughter]
39 when he calls me and wants to go fishing, I say well I gotta go to a
40 retiree's meeting or I've gotta go to something for the retirees. He said I
41 though you retired. And I says well I did retire. I retired from the shop but
42 I didn't retire from the people.
43
44 Female: [Inaudible 26:05].
45
46 Michael Bennett: That answers that well, I think.

1
2Female: [Good 26:08].
3
4Marilyn Coulter: Okay. [26:09] If you had – for the new people coming in and those
5 coming behind you, what's the biggest thing you could say about – what's
6 the best advice you could give them?
7
8Michael Bennett: [sighing] Get involved in your union. Believe in your union. Uh, there's
9 too many people in there that, that don't. Uh, the ones that do, I applaud'm
10 and that would be my thing, to get involved in your union so you
11 understand what it's about and be part of it.
12
13Marilyn Coulter: Thank you. Thank you for taking time.
14
15Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you, Mike.
16
17Male: Thanks, Mike.
18
19Female: Thanks, Mike.
20
21
22/lo