

1 **MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY – SHAWN NICHOLSON**
2 **RICHARD "DICK" BUDD DISCUSSES HIS CAREER AS A GM MANAGER**
3 **AT THE FISHER BODY PLANT IN LANSING, MI**
4
5

6 [recorder clicking]
7

8Cheryl McQuaid: This is Lansing Fisher Body Historical Team. [clanking] Today is June 5,
9 2006. It's approximately 9 a.m. on this Monday morning. We're at the
10 UAW Local 602 Frank Dryer Greenhouse. First, we'll [clanking] state the
11 names of the others present in the room.
12

13Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith.
14

15Richard Budd: Dick...
16

17Cheryl McQuaid: And I'm Cheryl McQuaid.
18

19Richard Budd: And Dick Budd.
20

21Cheryl McQuaid: [0:25] Dick, would you spell your name for us, please?
22

23Richard Budd: Yes. B-U-D-D.
24

25Cheryl McQuaid: [0:30] And what [clicking] is your address?
26

27Richard Budd: 828 Broken Ridge, Lansing, uh, 48917.
28

29Cheryl McQuaid: [0:37] And are you married? [0:38] Do you have children?
30

31Richard Budd: Yes. I'm married 46 years, have 4 children [background conversation
32 throughout audio] and 7 grandchildren.
33

34Cheryl McQuaid: [0:47] And where were you born and raised?
35

36Richard Budd: Uh, Lansing, Michigan. [clicking]
37

38Cheryl McQuaid: [0:53] What did your parents do?
39

40Richard Budd: Uh, my mother, uh, was a housewife and my father was an insurance
41 salesman.
42

43Cheryl McQuaid: [1:02] And what is your educational level?
44

45Richard Budd: Uh, graduated from Sexton High School and had 2 years at LCC.
46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:11] And were you in the military?
2

3 Richard Budd: [tsk] Yes, I was in the army [tapping] for, uh, 2 years.
4

5 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:17] And what else did you do before hiring in to Fisher Body?
6

7 Richard Budd: [tsk] I, I worked as a lab tech at the, um, State of Michigan when I got
8 outta the service and then I went from there to the Home Dairy downtown
9 [papers rustling] and, uh, was a grocery, uh, manager there [papers
10 rustling] until I hired in to, uh, Fisher Body.
11

12 Cheryl McQuaid: And you said that you went to Sexton School. [engine humming
13 throughout audio] [1:41] Do you have any memories of the plant and
14 going to school at Sexton?
15

16 Richard Budd: Yeah. We used to, uh, look in the windows to see what the next, uh, year's
17 product looked like. Uh, the windows were all open on the Verlinden side
18 and, uh, we'd go up and peek in there and, uh, talk to the guys once in a
19 while when we came by.
20

21 Cheryl McQuaid: [2:03] What did you think of the plant being a teenager?
22

23 Richard Budd: Oh, I just thought it was, uh, a big ole plant and, uh, [tsk] I ran track and,
24 uh, played football and it was always part of the, the neighborhood and,
25 uh, the guys used to, uh, come out the gate and watch the football games
26 once in a while.
27

28 Cheryl McQuaid: [2:24] Why did you hire in to Fisher Body?
29

30 Richard Budd: [tsk] Um, it was probably money. I was working like 80 or 90 hours a
31 week [clanking] at, uh, the Home Dairy and, uh, my mother-in-law
32 suggested I go over to Fisher Body 'cause that's where she was at and, uh,
33 [tsk] I did. I remember, uh – I think I hired in at, uh, \$3.02 an hour but that
34 was a big deal back then, in, uh, '64.
35

36 Cheryl McQuaid: So you hired in in '64 and you were already married. [2:55] Do you think
37 that your aunt helped you get into the plant? [2:58] I'm sorry – your
38 mother-in-law?
39

40 Richard Budd: Yeah, she did. Absolutely. Yeah. She got me an application and filled it
41 out, took it in and, uh, I think it was [Jerry Brooks 3:06] at that time [tsk]
42 was the, uh, guy that took the applications. And, uh, what was nice about
43 it, I found out through the years that, uh, when you had a family member
44 refer you, uh, they kinda checked on ya and made sure you were doing a
45 good job and, uh, we kinda lost that as the years went on. And, uh, when
46 the state started, [clanking] uh, hiring for us, uh, we got a buncha crappy

1 people but, uh, when the family thing was there, [squeaking] we had a lot
2 good people. [clanking]
3
4 Cheryl McQuaid: [3:41] How old were you when you hired in? [clicking]
5
6 Richard Budd: [tsk] I musta been 24.
7
8 Cheryl McQuaid: [3:49] What shift and department did you first work?
9
10 Richard Budd: Uh, I worked second shift, uh, Trim Shop.
11
12 Cheryl McQuaid: [3:55] Do you remember the job or the people that were around you?
13
14 Richard Budd: Oh, yeah. Uh, supervisor was Al [Dulhaney 4:00] and Larry – no Larry
15 [Dulhaney 4:04] and Al [Conley 4:05] were my supervisors. I hired in
16 with [Manuel Herrada 4:08] and, uh, we both got a, um, a molding job
17 where we had to, uh, jump in the trunk of every car and screw down the
18 moldings and when a convertible came along, uh, we had to drive 12 bolts
19 a piece on each side of the convertible. So we were in and out of every
20 single car at 43 cars an hour.
21
22 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:33] Do you remember what – you were making convertibles – what
23 kind of car?
24
25 Richard Budd: Yeah. It was, um, 88 back then in '64 and I think, uh – I was always on a
26 B line. They had a line and a B line. The B line was, uh, the big car line.
27 The A line was the Cutlass line.
28
29 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:54] And do you remember were there any pranks [thumping] pulled on
30 you when you first hired in?
31
32 Richard Budd: Um, no, I can't really say that. We just had a – we had a good team there
33 and, uh, everybody kinda worked together and helped each other. Um,
34 [tsk] I can remember some pranks pulled on me when I was a supervisor
35 but not, uh, when I hired in.
36
37 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:18] And what kind of lunches and breaks did you – do you remember?
38
39 Richard Budd: Uh, I think we carried our lunch back then. I'm sure we did. And, um, we
40 had a wagon break, a 12-minute break, um, in the morning and afternoon
41 and, and, um, [tsk] we had a relief man come around and give us another
42 break, so [rattling] we had plenty a breaks.
43
44 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:41] When you first hired in, what did you think of the plant and the
45 people? [tapping]
46

1Richard Budd: Um, I liked it. Uh, got along well with everybody.
2

3Cheryl McQuaid: [5:52] Did you ever get lost in there?
4

5Richard Budd: Um, no. Uh, I was pretty familiar with the front part where I had to come
6 in to Trim, so I just stayed in Trim. I didn't go to Paint. I didn't go to
7 Body Shop. I just stayed by my job until I learned the rest of the plant.
8

9Cheryl McQuaid: [6:10] What was the environment like? [clicking]
10

11Richard Budd: Well there was no ergonomics. I can tell you that. Um, it was, um, dark. I
12 can remember [rubbing] [tapping] not being well lit and, um, especially
13 the Body Shop. It w-, it was real dark down there and, uh, I kinda wanted
14 to stay away from that place. And it was smoky down there. The – all the
15 guns and stuff, uh, ventilation wasn't that great. [clanking] But Trim was
16 always a nice clean part and I, uh, lucked out and got in Trim.
17

18Cheryl McQuaid: [6:47] How long did you work on the line before [clanking] becoming a
19 supervisor?
20

21Richard Budd: I think it was 2 years, about 2 years on the line. I was – back then they had
22 Utility people and I was on a job, like I said, that started out and I tried to
23 learn all the other jobs around there because I found out if you knew a
24 lotta jobs, you could work double shifts. So every Friday, I'd work a
25 double shift or ev-, if especially if you worked Saturday and, um, [tsk]
26 made extra money that way.
27

28Cheryl McQuaid: [7:19] It seems like you remember, uh, the last time we tried to do this
29 interview, you told your wife if you made so much money...?
30

31Richard Budd: Oh, yeah. If I made \$10,000 [laughter] in 1 year we'd be millionaires and,
32 uh, actually did that the first year. And the second year, it was like, uh,
33 \$12,000. And then when I went on salary, I actually took a cut because I
34 couldn't work double shifts on salary and she says why don't you go back
35 to hourly [laughter] and I said no, we're not gonna do that.
36

37Cheryl McQuaid: [7:49] What was the process of becoming a supervisor like? [7:52] Eh,
38 was there a interview process [throat clearing] or [clicking] did they just
39 put you on?
40

41Richard Budd: [tsk] Uh, there was, there was a – kind of an informal, uh, interview
42 process and then there was a test that you had to take and, uh, I did that
43 and passed the test. I sweated all weekend worrying about did I pass or not
44 and I came in the next, uh, next week and I think it was a Thursday, they
45 called me in the office and said yep, you, uh, passed the test. We're gonna
46 put you on salary [clicking] Monday. I think it was the 15th or something.

1 They did it 1st or 15th. So I came in Monday on the nightshift and, uh,
2 they said wear a shirt and tie, so I wore a shirt and tie and that was it. They
3 gave me a group and, uh, luckily I knew all the jobs [tsk] and I knew a
4 lotta the people, so I kinda got along okay that way. But there was no, uh,
5 no one with me. I just was there. Uh, back then we had to punch in and out
6 with cards, so I didn't have to do payroll and, uh, there were a lotta things
7 that were different but, uh, it took a while to learn it but I got along okay.
8

9Cheryl McQuaid: [9:02] So you had absolutely no break in...

10

11Richard Budd: No.

12

13Cheryl McQuaid: ...on that job?

14

15Richard Budd: No.

16

17Cheryl McQuaid: [recorder clicking] [9:12] Dick, would you tell us a little bit about being a
18 first-line supervisor [tapping] in the plant?
19

20Richard Budd: Uh, yes. You were responsible for quite a number of people. And I can
21 remember that, um, [tsk] we had to drive a lotta screws back then in the
22 car and motors were a big deal and, uh, the, uh, type a screw from a
23 certain vendor was a big deal. [squeaking] In other words, when you self-
24 drive a screw, if you have a good vendor, which was [shape 9:41] proof,
25 they'd go in real easy. If you had a different vendor, it was hard for the
26 employees and, [squeaking] and we were – I'm talking like driving 10
27 screws in a wheelhouse molding on every car. Uh, the drips were, uh,
28 snap-on but the, um, eh, they had a retainer that held the weatherstrip that
29 took like 14 or 18 screws. So we drove a lotta screws in my area and, uh,
30 we were constantly trying to, uh, hide the good ones and give the other
31 shift the bad ones. [tapping] [squeaking] And, uh, we didn't have like, uh,
32 quality control or, uh, people that, uh, would be responsible for, uh,
33 incoming parts back then, so you kinda had to fight the battle on your
34 own.
35

36 And, uh, like I said, we had a lotta people and there was a PA system and
37 the general foreman used to stand down on the end of the line or the
38 Repair supervisor and, uh, call you down to Repair because somebody
39 missed a screw or somebody did this or that. And I remember one prank
40 when I was a new supervisor that was pulled on me. Uh, we went to lunch
41 and you had a half hour lunch then and I came back from lunch and I gotta
42 call from the supervisor, uh, one area up from me [tsk] saying that
43 somebody had picked the car off the truck and turned it around so it was
44 coming down the line backwards. And this is a second shift thing. So that
45 meant everybody had to run around the opposite side of the car and, and,
46 uh, do their job. [laughter] So that ended up to be a repair job obviously

1 but, uh, we found out who did it and, uh, [tsk] took care of'm but, uh, that
2 was the biggest prank that was ever pulled on me I think. And, uh, my
3 general foreman, Marshall Dean, at that time, uh, and Johnny Powers, they
4 couldn't believe we had a car coming down the line backwards 'cause it
5 took a lot to pick a car off a dock – uh, the truck and turn it around. But
6 that was probably the worst prank I ever had.
7

8 Um, we also had Utility people and we would always try to make, uh,
9 those people, um – help'm out because you never knew who was gonna be
10 absent back then [scratching] [tsk] and we had [squeaking] a couple
11 doctors, Dr. Geller and, uh, [Esther Jackson 12:11]. Both of those doctors
12 would, uh, give out slips and, uh, and you had a doctor's statement,
13 [thumping] uh, you kinda had to let the guy go or gal go but through the
14 years, we found out that, uh – we started keeping all the doctor's
15 statements, we finally got Dr. Geller, uh, with the IRS because we kept so
16 many statements. He'd just charge people 10 bucks and never look at'm,
17 just \$10 would write a statement. So we got'm through the IRS. So that
18 was a big plus for us, a lotta supervisors, because it was always a Friday
19 night thing or Saturday night thing.
20

21 [tsk] Um, a lotta the, uh, women that hired in to Trim, because of, uh,
22 motors, most of'm were secretaries in the past and, uh, we didn't – like I
23 said, we didn't have any ergonomic thing but we, we tried the best to
24 put'm on a non-driving, uh, job, you know, with screws but, uh, [papers
25 rustling] seniority wouldn't always let us do that. So I can remember girls
26 coming in and, uh, having hands swelled up like you wouldn't believe and,
27 um, there was nothing we could for'm back [thumping] then. We just had
28 to [clanking] say if you can't make it, [thumping] you can't make it. I
29 know Arlene Parker was [clanking] one of'm and so was [Pat Zoo 13:33]
30 and both of'm turned out [thumping] to be supervisors in our [papers
31 rustling] factory but, um, [tsk] it was hard. We used to try to give'm extra
32 relief, uh, used to try to do a lot of things to help'm but ergonomics was,
33 uh, not number 1 back then.
34

35Cheryl McQuaid: [13:52] What did you [thumping] think made a good employee?
36

37Richard Budd: First of all, I'd ask a new employee, uh, what's your background; where'd
38 you come from. And if they were a farm kid, I would take'm in a minute
39 because they were used to working. Uh, it was I always tried to get all the
40 farm kids. Um, like I said, a lot of'm were secretaries or whatever and,
41 and, um, [tapping] they were, uh, they were okay also but I liked the farm
42 kids 'cause they were, uh – they could take a lotta beating.
43

44Cheryl McQuaid: [14:27] Just hard workers?
45

46Richard Budd: Real hard workers. Yeah. [tapping]

1
2 Cheryl McQuaid: [14:32] So you were a supervisor for what, 8 years, 10 years?
3
4 Richard Budd: Uh, I think I was a supervisor for like 2 or 2-1/2, 3 maybe.
5
6 Cheryl McQuaid: [14:42] Oh, really?
7
8 Richard Budd: And then I became general foreman after that, [birds singing throughout
9 audio] so then I had all the supervisors under me. I had Hard Trim and,
10 um, I had the B line for many years.
11
12 Cheryl McQuaid: [14:55] What was the difference from being a supervisor to a general
13 supervisor? [rattling]
14
15 Richard Budd: Um, I had to deal with the union more and I had to, uh, make sure that, uh,
16 people – uh, each supervisor would call in and say, you know, I need, need
17 a person or I need 2 or 3 or whatever. You had to cover the line within the
18 first 5 minutes and you never wanted to hold the line for absenteeism. So
19 the first of the shift was a nightmare every day or every night for about the
20 first half hour, getting everybody covered and after that, it went pretty
21 smoothly. But [tsk] worked on quality every single night, probably looked
22 at 100-200 jobs every night for quality. And I tried to go around and talk
23 to people and especially the ones who were absent. [How do 15:45] I say
24 glad you could make it today; where the hell were you yesterday and, um,
25 I did that to everybody that was absent.
26
27 I knew everybody on my shift, both shifts by first name in my area. I used
28 to walk around and talk to'm and not always about absenteeism but I'd,
29 you know – I knew about their families. I knew about their kids and sports
30 and stuff. I think that was an important part of the, the job, just knowing
31 your people and, uh, knowing, uh, a lot about'm, uh, helped out a lot.
32 [whirring] And, and they'd tell ya things that would a – other people
33 wouldn't tell ya I guess. But, uh, it was like a big family to me in there.
34 [thumping]
35
36 Cheryl McQuaid: Did you, um – you said you worked with the union more as a general
37 foreman. [16:36] What did you think about the union?
38
39 Richard Budd: I, uh, I started out w-, with, um, a couple of, um – Al [Holmack 16:44]
40 was a really tough union guy and I started out from scratch and said okay,
41 you're gonna get me on a lotta things because I don't know, you know,
42 the, the, uh, contract like you do but if we work together, I think we can
43 accomplish a lot. And, uh, Al was a tough ole guy but, uh, when it came
44 across like that, him and I used to, uh – [rattling] at the beginning of the
45 shift, he would come in and, uh, after I got my manpower set, I'd ask him
46 if he had any problems or if I had any problems and we'd talk about it

1 every single day and have a cup a coffee and that was unheard of back
2 then.
3
4 I mean it was us and them. That's the way I always heard it but I didn't
5 think that was the right way to do business. So we, uh, we got along really
6 good. We did a lotta things. Uh, I'd tell'm we're gonna pull manpower and
7 [tapping] and where and that was unheard of back then but I said, you
8 know, the job is light. We're gonna do this and we're gonna spread the
9 work out and I know you've gotta write grievances if you have to but this
10 is the way we're gonna do it. And, um, [clanking] I just, uh, thought being
11 in contact with'm and not letting'm stay in the office down there and
12 maybe in my office and not communicating. I guess communication's a
13 big thing. [coughing] I got along good with the union, real good.
14
15 Cheryl McQuaid: You, um, were a general supervisor about '77, 1977 and 1978 when a lot
16 of women came into the workplace.
17
18 Richard Budd: Mm-hm.
19
20 Cheryl McQuaid: [18:22] How did that change the environment or did there – was there no
21 effect? [squeaking] [thumping] [clanking]
22
23 Richard Budd: Yeah. It changed a lotta things. Uh, basically, uh, [clanking] language
24 was, uh, terrible [clanking] in the shop, uh, and, uh, we tried to, uh, calm
25 that down [thumping] 'cause, uh, a lotta the women that came in were,
26 [clinking] uh, [background noise] younger and, uh, were scared, uh, never
27 been in a shop before, never been around older men and, uh, you know,
28 like – we had a lotta problems with, uh, getting the guys to not talk shop
29 talk in front of the ladies b-, I said just act like that's your daughter next to
30 you and would you be talking like that or wouldn't you be talking like that.
31 So that was one of the tough things. That and ergonomics I think were the
32 2 toughest.
33
34 Cheryl McQuaid: [19:11] So tell us a little bit more about some of the things that you
35 remember about the plant. I know that you were involved in the [clanking]
36 talent show, PDTs. [papers rustling] Um, kinda run through your work
37 experience at Fisher Body for us.
38
39 Richard Budd: Okay. Uh, yeah, the talent show [clanking] was always [thumping] an
40 Oldsmobile things and, uh, [tsk] got together with some Oldsmobile
41 people and said why won't we include Fisher Body. I'm sure we gotta lotta
42 talent over there. [pen clicking] So, we, uh, started out, [tsk] uh, the first
43 year and, uh, it was wonderful. I couldn't believe all the talent both at
44 Oldsmobile and Fisher Body. Uh, we had enter-, we had, um, tryouts and
45 we'd have like, uh, 75 acts and we had to cut it back to like 45 because the
46 time limit, you know, and, uh, some of the ones we cut were great but we

1 had to – and I had judges. And I always tried to get at least, uh, Miss
2 Michigan to come and judge. I – and, uh, other, uh, dignitaries from
3 around the city and stuff, uh, old teachers and, uh, just a lotta different
4 people and, uh, we had a good time. But the talent show was wonderful.
5 Um, also we had, um, uh, [tapping] uh, PDT people. Uh, that's the biggest
6 thing that made our job or made our cars so good, uh, right off the bat.
7

8Cheryl McQuaid: [20:53] What does PDT mean?
9

10Richard Budd: Product Development Team. And what these people did, uh – well,
11 actually I was on every pilot program all the way through. Okay? I was the
12 Pilot Manager for Trim or Body or whatever ar-, area I was in, I was the
13 pilot guy. And I always had a team of 7 or 8 people that were hourly folks
14 and, uh, the union and I picked'm and we didn't necessarily pick'm by
15 seniority, which was a big deal. I said I want the best people we have for
16 the job regardless of seniority. So we had an interview process and, uh, we
17 had several things we'd ask'm and the union was there and I was there and
18 we interviewed'm and I'm talking like [throat clearing] 50 or 60 people to
19 get 8 jobs. So every pilot program, we tried to have dif-, a different set of
20 people. Okay?
21

22 And, uh, what this did, it, it, um, allowed us to, [banging] uh, be upfront
23 with the new car engineering-wise. We went to Detroit every day and sat
24 in meetings and, uh, argued with engineers about design for assembly, DF,
25 uh, A. That was a big deal because the Japanese always designed their car
26 for the ease of the operator. We never did that. We never had that in our
27 process. We j-, the engineer would just design something and, uh, they
28 didn't care about design for assembly. [tsk] So that's the reason we were
29 so successful here in Lansing. I'm telling ya. Each department had PDT
30 people and if we hadn't a had that, we could've never pulled off, um, the
31 things we did here at Lansing. And I remember the last, the, uh, Alero and
32 the, uh, Pontiac Grand Am when we – when those come out brand new – I
33 can't remember what year – it musta been '96 or something like that – the
34 new ones. [22:58] Remember that big changeover we had?
35

36Cheryl McQuaid: [23:01] Wasn't that '85?
37

38Richard Budd: '85 was the first ones but then the...
39

40Cheryl McQuaid: [Inaudible 23:05].
41

42Richard Budd: ...the other one where we changed the plant, remember? And, uh, what we
43 did was, uh, we brought on a new product [squeaking] and still had the old
44 product at full line speed and that changeover when we went from the
45 Grand Am – to the Grand Am and Alero because of all the work that the
46 PDTs did in each area – Paint, Body, Trim, Chassis – [tsk] um, we pulled

1 off, uh, a turnaround from the old car to the new car in 18 days. And, uh,
2 in the past, Toyota had the world's record of 21. We did it in 18 [tapping]
3 and, uh, we turned that car on and it came off the line in great shape
4 because of all the prework that we did. And we started at, uh, 0 – phase 0,
5 which is the clays and this is the first time that they've ever let hourly
6 people in the, uh, Clay room for Oldsmobile and Pontiac. They never had
7 hourly people in there and if they were in there [clanking] they had to keep
8 their mouth shut and couldn't say anything. All they could do is observe
9 because these, uh, [papers rustling] designers are like prima donnas of GM
10 and they didn't want anybody tellin'm anything.

11
12 Well with our program, [sighing] because the engineers – and we've,
13 we've been in it since '84 with PDTs, all the engineering world knew
14 [tapping] all the PDT people. So [tsk] like I said, we changed every pilot
15 time but, uh, the reason we had a successful, uh, startup in all our pilot
16 programs was because of PDTs and that includes our new plant in Delta. I
17 think they're gonna come out, uh, a heck of a lot better than Lansing
18 Grand River because we still have PDTs of 602. 652 didn't choose to do
19 that [clanking] at the, uh, Lansing Grand River [coughing] plant and it
20 showed, uh, in their quality, uh, at first. As the car went along, they
21 corrected everything and got it going but, um, all the little things that, uh,
22 weren't taken care of because the PDTs weren't there, uh, the Saturn that
23 just came off the line at the new plant looks wonderful, so. And I've been
24 talking to the PDT guys and they said it's because of the upfront
25 involvement. So that's probably [thumping] the biggest thing I wanted to
26 get through, was PDTs are, um, the backbone of, uh, 602.

27
28 Cheryl McQuaid: You mentioned [tapping] the Clay room. [25:52] Uh, where is that?
29 [25:52] In Warren or...?

30
31 Richard Budd: Yes. It's, uh, down in Warren and, uh, [there was 25:56] people had to
32 drive there. They had their o-, they'd get their own – check out their own
33 car, go to meetings. I didn't hafta be with'm. They knew how to handle
34 themselves in a meeting. They knew how to take notes. Uh, I brought a
35 letter to the thing today, uh, showing you the appreciation of, uh, the
36 engineering world for our PDT people. [tapping] Oh, it's – yeah. It's down
37 in Warren and it's a big room and it's actually got a clay car in there and,
38 uh, you look at it and see if it – you know, you, you can improve on it and
39 we did.

40
41 Cheryl McQuaid: I think last week when we tried to do this interview, you had mentioned
42 one of the hourly guys actually spoke up and said something in the
43 [tapping] Clay room...

44
45 Richard Budd: Yes.

46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: ...and actually – [26:39] can you [banging] tell us a little bit about that?
2

3 Richard Budd: Yes. On the Grand Am, they had the, uh, fender and hood up towards the
4 windshield making a radical change and then down at the win-, down at
5 the, uh, headlamp, we had, uh, 3 places [tapping] we had to fit the h-, the,
6 uh, fender, the hood and the headlamp. Well there's no way you can fit the
7 up top part and the bottom part. There's no way you can fit that without
8 having a gap, you know, and it would be a nightmare for assembly. So
9 Brian Pertler pointed that out and they actually changed the clay to
10 represent a better s-, a better line for us so we could only – we only had to
11 fit the headlamp instead of the headlamp and the fender at the, um,
12 windshield area. So, yeah, that was a big deal right there. And the
13 engineers, um, agreed and changed it. That would've been a nightmare.
14

15 Cheryl McQuaid: [27:37] So a 602 guy...

16

17 Richard Budd: Yeah.

18

19 Cheryl McQuaid: ...actually was able to get the prima donnas to listen...

20

21 Richard Budd: Mm-hm.

22

23 Cheryl McQuaid: ...to him?

24

25 Richard Budd: Mm-hm. Yeah. [recorder clicking]

26

27 Cheryl McQuaid: So, Dick, when you hired in, you said that, um, the body shop was dark
28 and smoky and you wanted to avoid that but as a PDT manager, you
29 worked in the Body Shop. [27:57] Could you tell a little bit about the
30 Body Shop?
31

32 Richard Budd: Sure. Um, I worked in Trim for probably 20 years [clanking] and then I
33 was asked to go to the Body Shop as a, uh, general foreman. So I said
34 okay. So I went down and spent the remaining 15 years or so in the Body
35 Shop and at our last changeover we had, we redid the Body Shop, um,
36 completely. We, um, put in a new lighting system, put in new air
37 circulation. Um, our Body Shop turned out to be just as clean as the Trim
38 Shop. Uh, it was a wonderful thing that they did engineering-wise and
39 that's, that's the changeover that I was talking about earlier that, um, [tsk]
40 we actually beat Toyota. And, uh, we had, we have to have cooperation
41 from every single person in the Body Shop, uh, because we would, uh –
42 we shortened the line up by half so we could work on new products on 1
43 side of the, uh, roped-off area and run the regular product on the other side
44 and still maintained production. We did this for a year or so and, uh, it was
45 wonderful. I couldn't believe the cooperation from everybody.
46

1 And, uh, I mean, we got cement trucks pouring cement next to, uh – you
2 know, 10 foot away from a guy doing his job on the line. And, uh, we tried
3 to do a lotta the real, uh, crappy stuff like breaking up cement with all the
4 dust and stuff on the weekends so we wouldn't have, uh, you know –
5 affect the employees too much. But we even cut a hole in the front of the
6 plant so we could drive trucks in, right in to the Body Shop, big cement
7 trucks and stuff. Uh, eh, it was one heck of a accomplishment in the Body
8 Shop and we couldn't have done it without every single hourly rate's help.
9 And, uh, we had some problems but we worked through it and the union
10 helped a lot too. So, uh, our Body Shop turned out to be really nice, just
11 [papers rustling] like Trim and I was happy to be down there.
12

13Cheryl McQuaid: You mentioned also earlier about – when we were discussing the talent
14 show, you said you went over to Oldsmobile and asked that Fisher Body
15 be able to join the talent show. [30:21] Was that when Fisher Body w-,
16 turned into, uh...
17

18Richard Budd: Lansing [Inaudible 30:25].
19

20Cheryl McQuaid: ...Lansing Car Assembly or...?
21

22Richard Budd: [I think it was 30:27].
23

24Cheryl McQuaid: [30:28] What did you think of the name changes? I think it was BOP and
25 then BOC and then...
26

27Richard Budd: Yeah.
28

29Cheryl McQuaid: ...LCA and...
30

31Richard Budd: I didn't like the name change. I, uh – Fisher Body's always Fisher Body to
32 me and always will be. Uh, but when we went to, uh, BOC or – I can't
33 remember Lansing Car Assembly or whatever – that's when I went over
34 there and said okay, we're all together now, let's – can we get in the talent
35 show and they said absolutely we could do that. So we had a lotta help
36 from, uh, Tom [Police 30:56] at that time with that talent show. He helped
37 us out a lot and he was, um, general superintendent at Fisher Body, Tom
38 [Police 31:03] and, uh, he was an old Oldsmobile guy forever but, uh, he
39 sure helped us out to, to, uh, break down the wall between Oldsmobile and
40 Fisher Body.
41

42Cheryl McQuaid: [31:16] Was there a big wall?
43

44Richard Budd: Yeah, I think there was. Yep. And even today, I'm, I'm still a Fisher Body
45 guy, not an Oldsmobile guy but we'd, uh – we took care a all that. You
46 know, we intermingled, [thumping] uh, people and supervisors and

1 general supervisors and, uh, it was kinda [thumping] all one after that.
2 [squeaking]
3
4 Cheryl McQuaid: [31:38] What did you think of the skilled trades people in the plant.
5 [31:42] Did you [throat clearing] ever need jobs done by them,
6 government work [squeaking] jobs? [31:47] Um, how did you view
7 [banging] them as [clanking] employees?
8
9 Richard Budd: The, uh, skilled trade people, I really got involved with skilled trade
10 people more so in the Body Shop than in Trim because of all the robotics.
11 Uh, we had 2 or 300 ro-, robots down there and, and, uh, I worked really
12 close with the skilled trade guys because I was in on weekend work. Uh,
13 you know, I worked like 7 days a week for a year with the PDT [clanking]
14 guys putting new programs in [clanking] the robots and [engine starting]
15 they were a great bunch. I'll tell ya. Um, [tsk] and you have to work close
16 with'm. Uh, you're either with'm or against them. If you're against them,
17 they can kill ya on downtime and [background noise] stuff like that
18 [squeaking] but they really had some good ideas and, uh, they would come
19 up with, uh, you know, if y-, if you have a robot cell with 4 robots and it
20 takes, you know, 1 point – 1 minute to do the job, they would figure out
21 little ways to save the robot so it would, uh, [pen clicking] pick up another
22 spotweld or do something else, you know.
23
24 And in the Body Shop, we had a chance where you didn't have in Trim of
25 having robots pick up more welds and you could eliminate people that
26 way. So if you knew your skilled trades people [background noise] and if
27 they were really good at their job, you could have'm go into a cell and, and
28 pick up a r-, you know, a spotweld here or a spotweld there and go to the
29 next cell and do the same thing and then a-, and w-, what we did was try to
30 get the, the, uh, big guns [background noise] outta the Body Shop that
31 were real hard to work with, the heavy guns. Even though they're on a
32 balancer, you had certain maneuvers that you had to twist them and put'm
33 in. I worked really hard to get those jobs on a robot even though if it, eh,
34 you know, it eliminated people, fine but get those hard [tapping] jobs on a
35 robot. That's where they belong. They don't belong on a person. And, uh,
36 [squeaking] we did a lotta work with that and it helped out a lot. And the
37 skilled trade guys did a heck of a job. [banging] Got along with'm good.
38
39 Cheryl McQuaid: [33:58] So you considered'm good workers?
40
41 Richard Budd: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. You know, we hear about all these lazy guys don't
42 d-, I'm telling ya, when that line went down in the Body Shop, within a
43 minute we'd have [tapping] skilled trades there, the millwrights. Uh, you
44 know, we had a car off the line or something, the millwrights would be
45 there. Um, [tsk] they didn't care if we helped'm put a car back on the
46 track. They didn't call the committeeman. You know, they just – we were

1 worried about and concerned about output and the longer the line was
2 down, you know, we lost cars. [tapping] So they were involved in a lotta
3 things. And we had those guys, um – because I worked the weekends
4 with'm with the PDT, uh, knew'm real well. And they were actually
5 concerned about downtime. Uh, a lotta people say skilled trades were lazy.
6 They sat around all the time. They might sit around but I liked'm sitting
7 around 'cause when they were sitting around, I was running good. So I, eh,
8 that never bothered me. It bothered a lotta other people but it didn't bother
9 me. So that's why I got along with'm good.

10

11Cheryl McQuaid: [35:01] They were up and bustin' butt when you needed'm?

12

13Richard Budd: That's right. Exactly. Yeah. [tapping]

14

15Cheryl McQuaid: [35:06] What is one of your best memories of the Fisher Body plant?

16

17Richard Budd: [tsk] I think, uh, one of the best memories was, um, [tsk] when we, uh,
18 turned the plant around, uh, in 18 days and beat Toyota. That would be my
19 – one of the highlights of my career, I think.

20

21Cheryl McQuaid: [35:30] Do you have a happiest or a saddest or a funniest moment?

22

23Richard Budd: [tsk] Um, [tsk] I would say the happiest is when, uh, we presented the
24 PDT guys, uh, an award for doing their job. And I think, uh, one of the
25 funny ones was, uh, we had an elevator [papers rustling] on the main floor
26 in Trim that was by the offices and when you went to the offices, there
27 was a elevator there. I can remember, uh, we had a film crew come in and
28 they wanted us to, uh, [throat clearing] drive a Grand Am outta that
29 elevator real fast with the lights on and it was something to do with their
30 little [tapping] presentation they were making. So I had to get in this
31 elevator and they said okay go and I had to [knocking] drive that Grand
32 Am down the main aisle and they took a picture and then I had to slam on
33 the brakes. But that, that was fun – that was a funny time there. [laughter]
34 [pen clicking]

35

36Cheryl McQuaid: [36:27] Dick, is there anything that we've not asked you that you'd like to
37 comment on?

38

39Richard Budd: Uh, no. I just, uh, at my retirement party, uh, the one thing I mentioned,
40 uh, and I was very sincere about it was, um, you know, I worked here for
41 37 years and I gotta paycheck every day. I never missed a paycheck. You
42 know, a lotta people complain about, you know, the Fisher Body or
43 [binging] General Motors da-da-da but [thumping] for 37 years, I gotta
44 paycheck every time I was supposed to get one. You know, that's
45 amazing.

46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: I'd also like to comment you have another job. [37:13] I'm looking at your
2 shirt and [tapping] how many years have you been a firefighter?
3
4 Richard Budd: Oh, yeah. Uh, 35. I'm going on 35 right now years at, uh, Delta Township
5 Fire Department. And another part of the, uh, Fisher Body was, uh, getting
6 the ERT team together. I helped do that, which is a very important part of
7 the business.
8
9 Cheryl McQuaid: [37:34] What is the ERT team?
10
11 Richard Budd: ERT is Emergency Response Team. Uh, it's a buncha folks that, uh, have
12 radios on. They're in all the areas – Paint, Body, Trim – and if there's an
13 emergency of any kind, a fire or somebody gets cut or somebody passes
14 out or somebody has a heart attack, these folks respond immediately along
15 with Plant Protection and, uh, [coughing] that is carried through to
16 Lansing Grand River. They're still doing that. And, uh, I don't know about
17 our new plant but I hope – I would hope that would be one thing they do
18 carry on.
19
20 Cheryl McQuaid: I would hope so too.
21
22 Richard Budd: Yeah.
23
24 Jerri Smith: [Inaudible 38:15].
25
26 Richard Budd: Yeah. They have their little ambulance truck and, you know, they're...
27
28 Jerri Smith: I think so.
29
30 Richard Budd: ...well trained and I think that's still going on.
31
32 Jerri Smith: 'Cause I think [Janet Wilcox 38:21] is still [on 38:22].
33
34 Richard Budd: Yeah. [Janet Wilcox 38:22]...
35
36 Jerri Smith: Yeah.
37
38 Richard Budd: ...is involved in that a lot. Yeah.
39
40 Cheryl McQuaid: [38:26] Speaking of...
41
42 Richard Budd: But that...
43
44 Cheryl McQuaid: ...the Emergency Response Team, did you ever see anybody in the plant
45 get hurt?
46

1 Richard Budd: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Um, Body Shop one weekend, uh, a robot, uh, which
2 you can't, eh, you know, y-, there's procedures you do when you walk into
3 a robot cell. You shut down, you know, and you have lock out and all that
4 stuff. I saw a robot hit a guy in the head, uh, and he had everything done
5 right. I don't know why it happened that way but it did and, uh, it didn't –
6 just knocked his helmet off. He had a helmet on, ahh, [thumping] and, uh,
7 cut himself a little bit. But Body Shop, we get a lotta cuts and stuff but it's
8 a lot better now with Kevlar gloves and, uh, sleeves and all that stuff. So
9 we've improved a lot.
10
11 Uh, saw a couple a heart attacks. A guy die in the vinyl top area, uh, and
12 we tried everything we could to get'm back and we never got'm back, so
13 he just musta had a massive heart attack. But [squeaking] other than that,
14 uh, I was at one fire at Fisher Body. [coughing] That's when we had to
15 wear white shirts and ties and, uh, I don't know if you ever noticed but
16 when the sprinkler system goes off or you pull a hose in that water, it's the
17 crappiest water 'cause it's set in those lines forever and it stinks. I had that
18 crap all over my white shirt [banging] and all over me but we put the fire
19 out quick but [laughter] had to [clanking] go home and change that day.
20 [laughter] But usually, uh, I think we're pretty safe in the plants now and
21 there's a lotta things we do right.
22
23 Cheryl McQuaid: [40:01] Were you ever called outta the plant for a fire in Delta Township?
24
25 Richard Budd: Uh, no but I was – I came in late to – probably 3 times because of a fire in
26 Delta Township but I've never called out.
27
28 Cheryl McQuaid: Well, Dick, I really appreciate this interview. I thank you so much for
29 coming back actually to, to [banging] do it again for us and appreciate
30 your time.
31
32 Jerri Smith: Yes...
33
34 Richard Budd: No problem.
35
36 Jerri Smith: ...thank you very much.
37
38 Richard Budd: Okay.
39
40 Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you.
41
42 Richard Budd: Yep.
43
44 [recorder clicking]
45
46

1/lo